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ZOFFANY'S GREAT ALTAR-PIECE, placed to St. John. 1787.

THE

# Parish of Bengal,

1678 to 1788.

By H. B. HYDE, M.A., a Senior Chaplain on  
H. M. Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment.



JOHN EVANS, M.A.,  
First Chaplain, 1678.



Calcutta :  
THACKER, SPINK & CO.  
1899.



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## NOTE.

THE origin<sup>al</sup> documents upon which the following essay is based will be found fully quoted in "PAROCHIAL ANNALS OF BENGAL, *in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries*," shortly to be published by the Bengal Government. A portion of the contents has already appeared in the *Englishman* Newspaper in the form of reports of lectures by the present writer.

For nearly all the illustrations which adorn them, these pages are indebted to MR. EMILE MOREAU, who has, out of friendship for the writer as well as interest in the story, spared neither skill nor time in making the preliminary photographs.

ST. JOHN'S, CALCUTTA : },  
September 26th, 1899. }



## The Parish of Bengal.

“*Calcutta is not itself a parish though in a parish.*” This statement lies embodied in a very long minute concerning the duties of Churchwardens and Sidesmen passed at a meeting of the Vestry of St. John’s on the 28th of June 1787. Governor-General Lord Cornwallis presided at this meeting, and its transactions are to be found in full in the next subsequent issue of the *Calcutta Gazette*.

The great parish which included Calcutta is of course the Bengal Presidency ecclesiastically considered. It is with its affairs and fortunes that the present notes are concerned.

In the year following, 1788, the Company’s chaplains were all appointed to stations where their ministry was fixed. Thus they ceased to be, strictly

## The First Chaplain of "The Bay."

speaking, military chaplains and became all of them incumbents of quasi-parochial curés as they continue to be under their several Bishops to the present day.

With the year 1788 therefore it will be convenient to conclude the present survey of old parochial affairs.



IN the middle of the seventeenth century the London East India Company had already factories in Bengal. In 1667 the Court resolved to provide these with the services of a chaplain, but it was not until 1677 that an appointment to "The Bay," as the Bengal settlements were then collectively called, was actually made. Sir Joseph Ashe, one of the four and twenty "Committees," recommended for the curé John Evans, M.A., "Minister of the Gospel" and Curate of Thistleworth (now Isleworth). He was elected and without loss of time shipped from Gravesend. Fifty pounds a year was to be his salary with another fifty as gratuity if he satisfied the Council of



JOHN EVANS, D.D.,  
Lord Bishop of Bangor, Chaplain of The Bay, 1678 to 1692.

• *From a Painting at Lambeth Palace.*

• *See page 2 to*



## Character of . Chaplain Evans.

the Bay ; rates of pay settled in 1658 which remained unchanged for a century.

Evans was no common man. In him a down-rightness of disposition was happily blended with a winning gentleness of mien and speech. He was as tenacious of his purposes as he was zealous for the high cause he represented. In his conception of that cause he was, no doubt, much too protestant to please the old school, while his strict life must have been felt as a living rebuke to softness and slackness, the growing vice of his new parishioners. If he were himself slack in any direction it was in reverence for the divine right of Kings and the sacred monopolies of the East India Company. Such a man naturally won many fast friends and provoked as many enemies. He was twenty-eight years old when he embarked for Bengal ; stout in constitution, of handsome features, and fine stature.

The preliminaries to the appointment of a chaplain in the Company's service did not, when Evans came out, include the approval and license of the Bishop of



### **The Hughly Chapel.**

London ; that condition appeared first under royal command, in 1685. Besides salary and gratuity a chaplain was to have "accommodation of Dyet" (the Company's servants in the several factories had their meals at that time in common), and it had been promised also that "his other benefits would be very considerable." These "other benefits" may be plausibly conjectured to imply profits from traffic in merchandize with the natives of India.

Evans reached Hughly, the chief Bengal factory, in June 1678, and the next year a chapel for his ministrations is found to be in use there. Of this, the first English place of worship in Bengal, no particulars are forthcoming. The factors of Surat had at the time a well-appointed chapel and were, so they wrote, desirous of further adorning it with a "large table in a frame, gilded and handsomely adorned with Moses and Aaron holding the two tables containing the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, written in letters of gold, and in the midst at the top in triangles God's name writ in as many of the

## The Standard of Surat.

Eastern languages, Arabic, Persian, &c.; as could be procured." Evans' ambition for the equipment of the Hughly chapel would no doubt have been similar.

At Surat divine service was performed twice daily at this time, and the factory official who failed to attend it on Sundays was fined a crown, and on week days half that sum; but that, says Mr. Streyntsham Master in a contemporary letter from Bombay, was "a most excellent governed factory, indeed more like a college, monastery or a house under religious orders than any other."

Surat must have been the godliest factory in India, and Hughly, it is to be feared, was among the laxest; still the rules of Surat suggest the standard of religious discipline which the Company's Indian chaplains were expected to aim at. Matthias Vincent was, when Evans arrived, the chief of the Hughly factory, and, if half of what his detractors said about him was true respecting "diabolical arts with Braminees," "exercising charms" and "using poison," it is to be

## **Godly Discipline.**

inferred Evans had a troublesome task in propagating the customs of Surat. He certainly did his earnest best in this direction, for he was a punctilious disciplinarian and "ever had greatly at heart to fulfil the ministry which he had received in the Lord."

Happily, the most potent of all supporters in the cause of godly discipline came early to his aid in the person of Streynsham Master already mentioned, who had recently been promoted to be President of Fort St. George, and who arrived at Hughly late in 1679 to correct abuses. The disciplinary orders issued by Master include penalties of a day in the stocks and ten rupees to the poor for absence from the factory late at night without leave; three hours' stocks or twelve pence to the poor for swearing or cursing; twelve pence for lying; six hours' stocks or five shillings for appearing to be drunk; twelve pence for each failure to attend the daily Matins and Evensong, or else a week's confinement within the factory house. The orders

**Evans as a  
Merchant.**

bear the signature of Matthias Vincent as well as that of the President. They applied of course to Dacca, Cossimbazar, Balasore and the smaller factories as well as to Hughly.

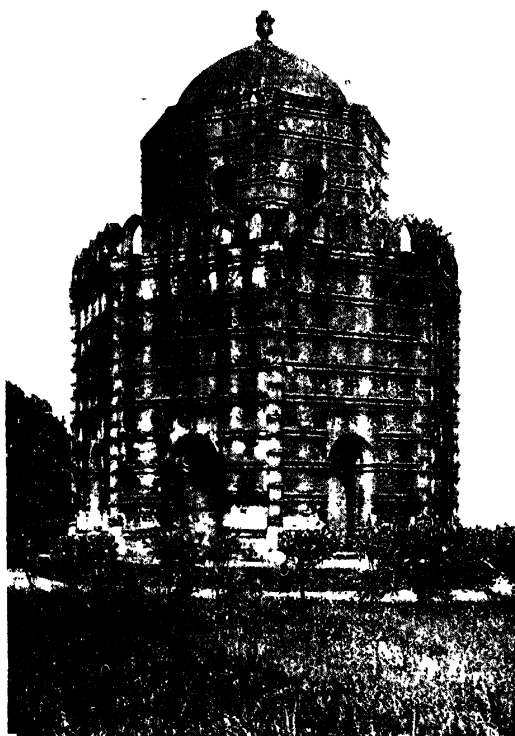
Of Evans' ministry in Bengal nothing definite is known; on his tombstone was inscribed "*Venerabilis in ethnicis*." It may therefore be surmised that besides performing his regular pastoral duties he attempted to impart the Gospel to the "Moors" and "Gentoos" and to convert the Papist "Musteeches;" all equally idolaters doubtless in his strongly protestant eyes. Evans had come out married, and children were born to him in Bengal. His salary was small, but he had a genius for trading. There was no harm in this had he confined himself to the permitted channels; but unfortunately he made many friends among the Cadiz "interlopers" or English traders who evaded the Company's monopoly by shipping from foreign ports. Through these friends he made successful investments in copper, Chinese zinc and other commodities, earning not only the displeasure but even the jealousy of the

**Evans'**

**Episcopate.**

expiring London Company who came to fear the services he could easily render to their rivals through his knowledge of the markets. In 1689 Evans was transported to Madras with Charnock, Vincent's successor, and the remnants of the Bengal Establishment after the disasters at Hughly, Sutanuti, Hidgelee and Balasore. In 1692 he was dismissed the Company's service, and at the same time probably detained at Madras; since his departure thence the next year bears the appearance of an escape. In 1694 he reached London and was soon presented to the rectory of his native parish, Llanaelhairn, in the diocese of Bangor. Shortly afterwards he took the degree of D. D. at Oxford, and bore an active part in founding the two venerable societies, the S. P. C. K. and the S. P. G.

His name is in the charter of the latter Society, and no one was more regular than he in attending the meetings of the former. In 1701 he was consecrated bishop of Bangor, the last of a line of Welsh-speaking bishops. In 1716 he was translated to



THE CHARNOCK MAUSOLEUM in St. John's Churchyard,

[ See page 9 ]



## The Father of Calcutta.

Meath, and after an exemplary episcopate, distinguished by unusual strictness of administration, he died in 1724, leaving the whole of a large fortune to church uses.



**E**VANS having ceased to be chaplain in the Bay, the Court appointed in 1695 a Mr. Isaac Polewheel to the vacancy. By that time Hughly had been abandoned by the London Company, and its Agent had established himself at Sutanuti, one of the three villages (the others being Govindpur and Calcutta) which, with their adjacent lands, occupied the site of the present capital of India. The interlopers, whose syndicate was to become the English East India Company under King William's Charter, had succeeded Charnock at Hughly and were there flourishing under the protection of the Nawab. Charnock had died in 1693 and left his new settlement in the utmost disorder. The strong will which once was his had strangely deserted him at Sutanuti; he had made



### **Charnock's latter days.**

scarcely any attempts at government, nor had he even planned out the premises of a factory. Violence, waste and vice ruled in the little colony, while he and the Captain of his guard set their subordinates fighting duels. The Agent, so it was said, developed a savage temper and flogged his servants for trivial offences, the execution being "generally done when he was at dinner, so near his dining-room that the groans and cries of the poor delinquents served him for music."

It is also alleged that Charnock turned heathen and sacrificed a cock on his native wife's grave, while the Captain kept a punchhouse and "let his wife turn Papist without control."

The latter statement, which is authentic, reveals at once the decay of English Christianity in Bengal at this time and the activity of the Portuguese friars of St. Augustine whose head-quarters were the Priory of Bandel by Hughly.

A large number of the servants of the factory and Charnock himself (the legend of the cock cannot refer to this alliance) had contracted matrimonial and

## The Friars

Other unions with the half-caste Portuguese women, and for their benefit the friars had built a chapel in Calcutta village. Thus it is likely that for several years about this period the only public Christian worship in Bengal was according to the Roman rite. Sir John Goldsborough, who visited the factory in 1693 to attempt a reformation, mentions the activity of the friars, and adds in his report that the example of the conversion of the Captain's wife had been quickly followed. He strove to check perversions by drastic means, for he writes : " I turned the priest from hence, and their mass-house was to be pulled down in course, to make way for the factory when it shall be thought convenient to build it."

Polewheel, presuming him to have actually arrived—there is no record of his arrival,—would have taken charge of his parish in stirring times. Order and discipline were becoming established in the settlement, but the Hindu Rajahs westward of the river had rebelled against the imperial throne, and the Nawab of Bengal had called upon the English, Dutch and

### **The Bishop of London.**

French factories to defend themselves as best they could. Here the English at once saw and seized their opportunity. They fortified the new factory enclosure in Calcutta, naming it "Fort William."



POLEWHEEL was in 1698 succeeded on the Company's books by John Powell, whose appointment is interesting in its cancellation a few weeks later because the rescinding order is accompanied by a rider which has continued to the present day as a rule in the appointment of Indian chaplains whether of the Company or of the Queen. This rule, which, though enjoined by Royal command in 1685, had been for some years neglected, is to the effect that the approval of the Bishop of London should in future be requisite in the appointment of chaplains. Thus all the English clergy in India until the foundation of the Calcutta Bishopric in 1814 looked to the Bishop of London as their diocesan. Since the union in Queen Anne's time of the London and English Com-

## **Evangelistic Aims of the E. E. F. C.**

panies to the present day, however, the Archbishop of Canterbury has been associated with the Bishop of London in the supervision of appointments.

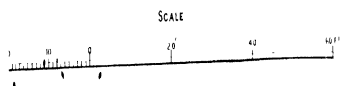
In 1698 the new English East India Company, which was wholly to supersede the old one on the expiration of the latter's charter in 1701, obtained its incorporation; and it is important to notice, as bearing on the future of English Christianity in India, that the new charter besides requiring the maintenance of chaplains in garrisons and superior factories and on ships above 500 tons burden, enacts also that Indian chaplains must apply themselves to learn, besides Portuguese, the native language of the country where they should reside, the better to be able to instruct the heathen servants or slaves of the Company or their agents "in the Protestant Religion." The same year the Archbishop and the Bishop of London drew up a prayer, long after in daily use in the factories, beseeching God that "these Indian nations amongst whom we dwell beholding our good works may be won over thereby to love our most

**Rowland**

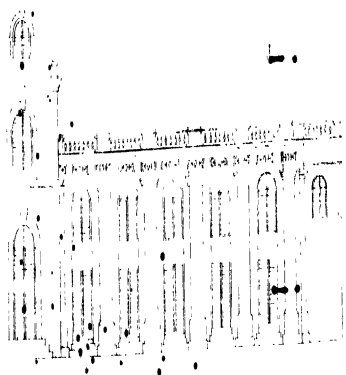
**Harwood.**

holy religion." The book of Common Prayer had already been translated into Portuguese and sent out to their factories by the London Company.

The same year, 1698, the English Company sent out as its first chaplain to Hughly a Mr Thomas Clark, who died within two months of his arrival. Now, according to the charter, Clark's place should have been taken by the chaplain of the next Company's ship anchoring in the port; it happened that the next ship was the *De Grave* which had brought out to India John Pitt, "His Majesty's Minister and Consul for the English Nation in general on the whole coast of Coromandel," with his retinue of officials, and one Rowland Harwood was her chaplain. This man was a protégé of the Bishop of London and, since the Hughly president described him as an enemy of King William, who taught that as a priest he was exempt from the secular authority, we may infer that he was a High Church Tory, and further, since he fled the factory as soon as the *De Grave* arrived and took refuge at Fort William, without



SOUTH ELEVATION



- A VESTIBULE
- B VESTRY (?)
- C STAIRCASE (?)
- D ORGAN LOFT
- E BUTTRESSES BUILT PROBABLY  
AFTER THE STEEPLE WAS THROWN  
DOWN BY THE CYCLONE OF 1737



**Benjamin  
Adams.**

even waiting to draw five months' pay (he "entered into the enemy's camp" runs the original report), we may presume that his experience of Orange Whiggery during the voyage had completely daunted him. He probably officiated at Fort William, but without salary from the Company. The Hugly factors professed to get on well without a chaplain, "having the same prayers and as good sermons" so the President wrote, the latter being out of sermon books supplied by the Court. •



ON the 6th of June 1700, some ten months after poor Rowland Harwood had sought an asylum at Fort William, an old Bengal official, Sir Charles Eyre, arrived there as Agent, in company with a new chaplain of the Bay, described as "a sober, virtuous and learned man;" this was Benjamin Adams, a young priest, ordained but a few weeks before his departure from home. Adams brought with him, so says the Court's letter, "a very handsome collection of modern



### **Adams' pastoral labours.**

books as an addition to the Library." After some months of government, Sir Charles Eyre, "seized with a strange distemper" resigned his office and returned home for good. There his distemper proved to be love-sickness, for he speedily married and was "much transported in the sweet embraces of his mistress." The departure of so powerful a supporter, for Sir Charles was a good friend to Adams, must have been a painful blow to the young chaplain. The "discouragement," "disadvantage," and "ill-treatment on all hands" of himself and others of the "Missionary clergy," which he deploras in an existing letter, must have direct reference to his own experience in the still ill-regulated colony within the walls of Fort William. He was a man of zeal and energy who honourably earned his early persecution. His merits, however, won their way, and the local council reported to the Court very favourably of him. In the churchyard of St. John's, Calcutta is an epitaph to Adams' wife who died in 1703: in this the widower describes himself as "Ecclesiæ Christi in Bengala

## **The Rotation, Government.**

pastor." Plainly he viewed his evangelistic vocation as embracing a larger field than the factories of the Company.

On the union of the two Companies Adams passed over, in 1704, into the establishment of the Bengal "Rotation Government" which soon became, so said the then Governor of Fort St. George, "the ridicule of all India." One effect of this arrangement was probably to throw the religious discipline of the old Company, which, it must be presumed, Adams had done his best to rehabilitate into disregard. Like disregard infected Fort St. George, where the old custom of the Council meeting every Sunday morning to accompany the Governor to Church was then being resisted. With three Councils in session at Calcutta whose interests frequently conflicted, it is not to be supposed that official religious observances were better respected there than in the elder presidency. Nevertheless, in this very year Adams, assisted by William Anderson, Chaplain of the then abandoned factory at Hughly, set vigorously afoot

### **The first Church- building Scheme.**

a project for the building of a Presidency Church. Calcutta was rapidly becoming a populous town and a thriving port; and the Church-building appeal was responded to in a manner that surprised even its promoters. Not only the Company's servants and other settlers, but also the ship captains sent in liberal contributions towards it. Thus encouraged, the two Chaplains in September of 1704 petitioned the Council of the united Company for help towards their enterprise in a letter which shows plainly that the "Missionary Clergy" had already lived down the popular antagonism and surmounted the discouragements so bitterly complained of by Adams a few years earlier. In response, the Council granted Rs. 1,000 and a site for the Church. It is incidentally mentioned in the Consultations of October 1704, that the daily Matins was being continued, for the Council required the hour for it to be changed from 10 o'clock to 8; as the former hour interfered with business. Shortly after this Adams had leave to proceed to Madras, and took with him a letter

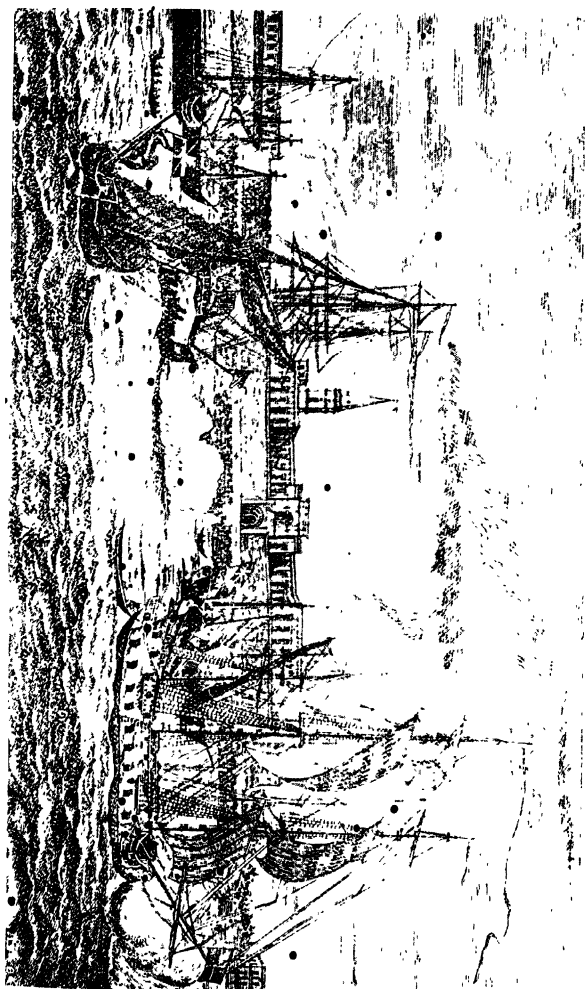
**William  
Anderson.**

from the Council to aid him in raising money there for the Calcutta Church. The collection went on steadily until Michaelmas 1706 when Adams suddenly resigned his Chaplaincy and, having made his will, sailed for home. He died on board the ship, however, shortly before she reached the Thames. "Brother Anderson," as Adams called him, succeeded to the Chaplaincy, and, though he did not enjoy anything like his predecessor's influence in the settlement, carried on the Church-building project, by the help of a Committee, to successful accomplishment.

Four of Anderson's sermons exist in print. They were preached about the time of his appointment. The texts alone, to say nothing about the discourses themselves, are highly suggestive of the local disorders which the preacher endeavoured to castigate: "I say unto you love your enemies"; "Where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work"; "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates"; "He that hateth his reproof shall die."

### **'Violence' and strife in the City.'**

The factory disorders find a curious illustration in a gentle censure recorded by the Council against their excellent Chaplain, Adams. A member of Council had ordered one of the padre's servants to be imprisoned for beating a native factory official. Adams took up his servant's cause and so far defied law and order that he shut him up in his own house and refused to deliver him up to justice. The Council sent for the Chaplain and advised him to be of a "more peaceable temper, and to be more civil and respectful to the Government for the future." This was in April 1706: the previous month a ladies' quarrel is recorded, a factor's wife, so writes her husband, was deeply affronted because the surgeon's wife would insist in taking precedence of her in Church,—it is not known in what part of the factory divine service was then conducted,—and Sunday after Sunday would "squat herself down" in the chair which the factor's lady should have graced. The angry husband went so far as to cast upon the Council all responsibility for "any disturbance or unseemly conduct that may





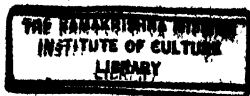
## Consecration of St. Anne's.

arise in Church in consequence"—one would like to know whether Mrs. Factor ever did snatch the bonnet of Mrs. Surgeon—but the minutes are silent as to the issue.

These, however, are but small squabbles: Prof. C. R. Wilson's *Early Annals of the English in Bengal* reveals at this time much deadlier strifes:—sailors quarrelling with landmen, and the Company's servants with the private traders; a ship's captain ready to fight with the president over a matter of salutes and an ex-president spending the last years of his life abusing his colleagues.



IN 1709 the permanent Church was completed. The Bishop of London, urged by the Bishop of Bangor, better known in these pages as Chaplain John Evans, had constituted Anderson his Commissary for the Consecration, and he, on the Council's petition, executed the Commission on the Sunday after Ascension, June 5th, of that year. The Commission





### **The consecrated ground.**

describes the Church as erected “apud Arcein sive Propugnaculum Wilhelmi infra Regnum Berghalie in Indiis orientalibus.” The *Petition* speaks of it as “a fair and beautiful church” and the *Sentence or Act*, a long latin declaration, dedicates it in the name of Saint ANNE, with complimentary reference doubtless to the reigning sovereign. This consecration by commission is interesting as being the earliest Episcopal Act in Bengal of the Anglican Church and as demonstrating the Ecclesiastical position of the English settlements there as an outlying parish of the Diocese of London.

In the lapse of time this consecration, by which the Company guaranteed the site as well as the building to religious uses for ever, became entirely forgotten; for in 1776, after St. Anne's had lain in ruins twenty years, and Chaplain Johnson was doing his utmost to procure the aid of the Council in the erection of a new Presidency Church, it was never mentioned. Had Johnson known the obligations undertaken by the Company with respect to the original Church, he

## Architecture of the Church.

could not have failed to dwell upon them in his correspondence with the Council, and would have protested when its site was leased as waste land, in perpetuity to Thomas Lyons. The Council Chamber and offices of the Bengal Government now overlap the consecrated ground.

Besides giving the site, the Company made further contributions towards the cost of the building and gave all the iron required for barring the windows. "Asiaticus," a curious antiquary of the end of the century, tells us that the S. P. G. presented the Chalice, and that this, surviving the sack of Calcutta, was melted down with other old silver after the new Church was built.

The Church, designed it is to be supposed, in the "Queen Anne style," consisted of a nave about 20 feet broad and 80 long, terminated by an apse and covered by a high pitched roof. There were north and south aisles separated by pillars from the nave and having flat roofs. As money afterwards came in, an organ loft was added at the west and also a vestibule and steeple. This steeple seems to have been of

## **The Belfry and Steeple.**

wood sheathed in metal and to have arisen to an extraordinary height. In 1712 a bell was sent out to the Church, and as there was then no belfry, the Council resolved to build a "convenient and handsome place to hang it in over the Church porch"—perhaps this was the origin of the steeple.

The Revd. J. Long says, but on what authority is not evident, that the Governor and Council, civil servants and the military used to walk together in procession to Church on Sundays at this time, and that the Court had refused to sanction the purchase of a State carriage for the Governor for this Church-going. The coach certainly was not a necessity, for St. Anne's immediately overlooked the Fort. The parochial establishment at this time consisted of the Chaplain and one Churchwarden and probably a sidesman, a clerk, who was most likely also sexton and undertaker, and a few menial servants. At a later time we hear of at least one salaried singer. Somewhere about this period a pestilence (several can be traced during the century) visited Calcutta.

## A Terrible Pestilence.

and Captain Hamilton's allusion to it gives an idea of the size to which the town had grown, for he says that "one year I was there, there were reckoned in August about 1,200 English, some military, some servants of the Company, some private merchants and some seamen belonging to shipping lying at the town; and before the beginning of January there were 460 burials registered in the clerk's book of mortality." As this terrible visitation cannot be traced in the registers, transcripts of which at the India Office begin in 1713, it must be referred to some earlier year.



ANDERSON died in 1711 on a voyage to Madras, and after his decease the Chaplaincy was vacant for two years. During the interval a Member of Council officiated in Church on Sundays. To present an appearance of solemnity suited to this sacred purpose, this gentleman provided himself with a suit of black clothes, the prevailing dress of the Queen

**Samuel  
Briercliffe.**

Anne period being somewhat gay, and the Council presented him with a hundred rupees to reimburse the expenditure. At length in August 1713, the Revd. Samuel Briercliffe (a young Yorkshireman, who had been educated at Westminster, and Trinity, Cambridge) arrived as Chaplain of the Bengal Settlements. He had been introduced to the Court with most excellent testimonials from Hatfield where he had been Assistant Curate. His Rector and the Dean of Peterborough vouched for him as sober, diligent, peaceable, well-beloved by the parishoners and a good preacher. In Bengal he proved himself a devoted and active clergyman, and became as popular as he had been at Hatfield. The Court nevertheless for some obscure reason mistrusted him ; and announced his appointment to Fort William in the following ungracious terms : " We hope he will answer our and your expectation, but if he should walk unworthy his vocation, you are clothed with power to remove the infection of any person's evil example." Three years later the Court wrote again " we take



THE TOMB IN THE BURNING GROUNDS (near St. John's Cemetery) with the  
 of Spanish Mission, about 1740, seen above the Palisades  
 and beyond the Creek.



### **The Court prejudiced against Briercliffe.**

notice of the commendations you give of Mr. Briercliffe, your Chaplain. We hope he deserves it, and shall be glad it continues, but we have a character of him that doth not correspond therewith at all times. That he understands and practises other matters besides those that directly or in consequence respect his function, and though they may be thought excusable in others, are not so in him, and wherein the following of his example is not praiseworthy in any. . . . You say Portuguese comes easy to him. It had been better expressed if true, that he hath taken pains and is master of it," and the letter goes on to hint that he might have already learnt Persian as well.

Leaving conjectures as to what might have provoked this ungenerous treatment of Briercliffe's character and motives, it is satisfactory to examine the facts of his pastoral career in Bengal. He landed full of zeal to promote among other good works the projects of the 'S. P. C. K.' One of these was the establishment of Charity Schools in the Indian factories, in pious emulation of what the Lutheran



## The Charity School Scheme.

Missionaries, who had been sent out by the King of Denmark to minister in the Danish factories of Southern India, had already accomplished. The Society trusted, no doubt, to the Company's paying the schoolmasters in obedience to a section of its Charter.

Three months after his arrival Briccliffe wrote a letter to the S. P. C. K. on the subject of a Charity School. On receipt of this letter he was elected a corresponding member of the Society, and a parcel of books was sent out to him. Another parcel followed the next year. The volumes went, no doubt, to augment the library which had been begun by Adams and his friends. In Calcutta he did his best to set up a Charity School and proposed to devote an hour or two daily to its oversight. The idea, however, did not then find favour in the settlement and waited fifteen years for its accomplishment. In Hough's *History of Christianity in India* the substance of a letter, now lost, from Briccliffe to the S. P. C. K. is given. In it he alludes to the failure

**Briercliffe's  
public-spirit.**

of this attempt at setting up a school, and says of the English at Calcutta "we are not one in two thousand; we have few Protestants in this place besides those of our own nation." In 1716 he interested himself in the Bombay Church-building scheme, sent a donation of a hundred rupees towards it, and collected besides a considerable sum from his parishoners for the same purpose. The series of returns to the Court, from the Parish Registers of Fort William begins with Briercliffe's incumbency. He served but four years and died leaving a thousand rupees "to the Church of Bengal," meaning probably to the completion or embellishment of St. Anne's, a hundred pounds to his mother and a hundred to Christ's Hospital in London.



**A**FTER Briercliffe's death, in August 1717, two years and five months elapsed, when there was no resident Chaplain in Bengal; during the interval, however, one of the two factory Surgeons

**Capt. Hamilton**  
**on Religion in Calcutta.**

read prayers in the Church on Sundays, and received at the end of that time 400 sicca rupees for his services, a reward which the Council describes as "the usual gratuity allowed by the Company to their Chaplains over and above their stated salary and allowances." To this period may most probably be referred the following quaint account of the religious state of Calcutta given by Captain Hamilton: "In Calcutta all religions are freely tolerated but the Presbyterian; and that they browbeat" (which shows, says some one, that Scotchmen had not then got their present hold upon the presidency; Hamilton himself was a Scotchman). "The Pagans carry their idols in procession through the town. The Roman Catholics have their Church to lodge their idols in, and the Mahomedan is not discountenanced; but there are no polemics except between our High Church men and our Low, or between the Governor's party and other private merchants on points of trade." (He was himself a private merchant). 16, 469.

## A Famine of the Word of God.

From the death of Briercliffe until the arrival of Paget in 1722, four years and-a-half, there is no record of any Sacraments having been administered in Calcutta according to English rites, except in December of 1721, when a Mr. Long baptized three children, and in the following February when some one solemnized a marriage. Chaplain Thomlinson, during the four months he survived his appointment, recorded no baptisms nor marriages, but he must sometimes have celebrated the Holy Eucharist, and it is to be presumed that the Chaplains of the Company's ships, anchoring at the Port, occasionally administered that Sacrament at St. Anne's, though evidently none was willing to undertake the Pastoral care of the Parish which, according to the terms of the Charter, should have been assigned to one of them.

Joshua Thomlinson was, like his immediate predecessor, a Yorkshireman and a graduate of Cambridge. He arrived from St. Helena, where he had been Chaplain, in January, and died in May 1720; a few months later his widow followed

## **Spiritual duties of the clergy.**

him to the grave. Their wills contain the earliest recorded benefactions towards that scheme which Briercliffe had had so much at heart. He left Rs. 80, and she Rs. 40 towards the Charity school fund.

No record exists of the ordinary routine of spiritual duties performed by the Calcutta Chaplains, but the presumption is that they were expected to carry out, as we know was the usage in Bombay in 1718, almost the whole appointed order of public worship daily throughout the year. On Sundays and holidays a sermon would always have been preached and the children catechised, the Holy Communion being celebrated once a month and on Christmas Day, Easter Day and Whitsun Day. Matins on week-days at Bombay at this period was at 8 and on Sundays at 10; Evensong always at 4.

Nearly two years elapsed after Thomlinson's death ere his successor Joseph Paget arrived. He, too, was a Cambridge man, and his incumbency was also swiftly cut short by death. He had just completed



ROBERT MAPLETOFT, M.A., Chaplain.  
*From a portrait in the possession of his descendants.*  
[See pages 50 to 56.]



**Joseph  
Paget.**

his second year in Bengal, when in March 1724 he fell a victim to the climate. He was at the time on tour at Dacca, where his tomb is still kept in repair by Government. He bequeathed his books to the Calcutta Church Vestry. Thomlinson's widow had made a similar bequest. It is plain therefore that, as has already been suggested, a parish library was accumulating at St. Anne's.



**A** GAIN a long interval without a Chaplain, save for seven months when a clergyman from Tellicherry officiated, until on the 22nd of August 1726 there arrived a man who was destined to set the climate for thirty years at defiance and then to perish, not by an Indian sickness, but by suffocation in the Black Hole. This sturdy priest was Gervas Bellamy, who had been Prælector or Reader of the parish of St. Mary, Somerset, London. He was not, so far as can be ascertained, the graduate of any University; he had had a four years' deaconate.



**Gerbas  
Bellamy.**

and had plainly been one of those "inferior" clergy of London, whose penury is deplored by one of themselves in 1722 in a letter to their Bishop. "They were," says this writer, "objects of extreme wretchedness, they lived in garrets, and appeared in the streets with tattered cassocks." Bellamy had indeed a small stipend, but many of his brethren had little else than their fees. "The common fee," complains the writer of the letter, "for a sermon was a shilling and a dinner; for reading prayer, two-pence and a cup of coffee."

It is reasonable to assume, considering his lack of a university degree, the humbleness of his office, his long diaconate, his age, he was in his 36th year, and the prevailing poverty of his order, that it was *res angusta domi*, no less than the being able to secure patronage; that determined his vocation to the service of the Lord beyond the seas.

The day after his landing there was a funeral, and from that time onwards for many years, until the Company sanctioned to him an assistant in Holy

## The Park and its surroundings.

Orders, Bellamy must have read the burial service three or four times every week.

The burying ground of Bellamy's time was that in which Charnock had been buried, and which continued in sole use until 1768. It is now included in the compound of St. John's Church. Adjoining it was the hospital of which Hamilton had written, "many go in to undergo the grievance of physic, but few come out to give account of its operation." North of the burying ground and hospital, at a few minutes' walk, lay Fort William, an irregular quadrilateral with the river west of it, and on the East the Parish Church and the Park or *Lall-bagh* with its splendid tank. The lofty steeple of the Church, completed before 1724 (where it is recorded to have been injured by lightning) was the most conspicuous ornament of the town. The principal houses lay north of the Church and Park. By this time the Company's superior servants had each of them private residences, but the factors and writers, as well as the two or three hundred soldiers (whose chief duty was

## **The Mayor's Court and the Parish.**

to convoy saltpetre, piece-goods, raw silk and opium from Patna, Dacca and other out-agencies to Calcutta) were still lodged in the Fort. The native population was settled in the Great Bazar or "Black Town," beyond the Christian boundaries, and at Sutanuti and in Govindpur.



THE year after Bellamy's arrival a royal Charter was received in Calcutta erecting a Municipal Corporation with power of holding a Court to decide all causes, civil, criminal and ecclesiastical, in which an Englishman might be concerned, high treason only excepted. The suits called ecclesiastical were such as concerned probate, wardship of minors, and administration of intestate estates. The creation of this new jurisdiction marked an era in the history of Calcutta, and the Mayor's Court became curiously linked with the parochial institutions by the early connection of the building in which the Court sat with the Parish Church. This building belonged to

## **The Old Court House.**

the Church and had been designed to accommodate the Charity School. It was completed about 1730, and was at once found convenient for the purposes of the Court, which paid for the use of it. The rent thus obtained became the mainstay of the fund in the hands of the Clergy and Vestrymen, out of which the Charity School was maintained. The "Court House," as it soon came to be called, stood till rather more than a century ago when it was demolished by the Company, who had taken it over from the Parish on a perpetual lease. Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk now occupies its site, but the Governors of the Charity still draw from the Treasury the rent of the building, eight hundred sicca rupees a month.

The Charity in 1890 absorbed the then new Free School and adopted its name, and now flourishes as one of the principal educational institutions of Bengal. Besides the rent of the Court House, which gradually grew from thirty arcot rupees a month to the amount already stated, the Parochial Charity Fund received the alms at the Offertory, legacies and donations and

## **The Charity School.**

the fees (twelve, twenty-five, or forty arcot rupees) paid for the use of palls at funerals.

Whether Bellamy actually found when he arrived the long-thought-of Charity School in existence or not, there is no doubt but that public interest in the undertaking was greatly stimulated during the first three years of his incumbency by the efforts of "an eminent merchant," identified by tradition with Mr. Richard Bouchier afterwards Governor of Bombay. The S. P. C. K., who aided the scheme, state in their report of 1733 that there were eight boys on the foundation of the Calcutta School with about forty other scholars; and that these eight foundationers were clothed after the manner of the blue-coat boys of Christ's Hospital. At a later date we find blue perpets, or everlasting cloth, for their uniform asked for of the Company.

We may thus infer that the Calcutta Charity boys were habited in blue cassocks, and since we cannot add the yellow stockings and buckled shoes to their costume, we may safely assume that they went bare





## Legendary origin of the Court House.

foot as their successors in the Free School do to the present day, and bare-headed too. It is likely that the first schoolmaster, unless the parish clerk had that charge, was a Goanese Friar whom Bellamy had received into the Church of England, and to whom the Vestry allowed a stipend of 30 rupees a month. By the end of the century the origin of the Court House and of the Charity fund had become points of antiquarian curiosity, and the Minutes of the Vestry Meeting referred to at the beginning of these notes adopt the opinion that the House was a bequest from the millionaire Omichand, and that the Fund originated in the share of the Nawab's restitution money assigned as compensation for the loot of Church property. *Asiaticus*, however, got a little nearer to the facts when he attributed the House to the gift of Mr. Bouchier, who, he thought further, had made a bargain with Government respecting its perpetual rent. Charles Weston, who had been Vestry Clerk at St. John's Chapel, (the building which had served as the parish Church between the destruction of



## The Church steeple blown down.

St. Anne's and the foundation of the present St. John's,) stated the history correctly in a letter given by *Asiaticus*, but his testimony was not accepted by the Vestry nor by *Asiaticus*, nor has it been accepted by later writers.

In the year 1737, at the close of the monsoon, a furious cyclone carried away the whole of the steeple of St. Anne's above the level of the nave roof.

*Asiaticus* gives what purports to be an extract from the *Gentleman's Magazine* of the following year descriptive of the storm. A passage which contains this startling sentence—"The high and magnificent steeple of the English Church sank into the ground without breaking." The actual note in the *Magazine* does not contain this statement; nevertheless it has obtained the currency of tradition. The outflowing tide was held back for nearly four and twenty hours, and the Hughly rose at Calcutta, so, it is said, fully forty feet, and must have spread a deluge of mud and wreckage over the settlement; this perhaps partly concealed the prostrate spire, which, if it were a structure

## The Cyclone of 1737.

of timber, may have held pretty well together, hence the legend. This storm is famous in the annals of Calcutta and has an earthquake to accompany it in some accounts. A private letter written three months afterwards at Calcutta, and discovered by Mr. Wilson, describes the night of horror and continues :—"good God ! What a sight was the town and river in the morning ; not a ship but the *Duke of Dorset* to be seen in the river, where the evening before was above twenty-nine sails of vessels, great and small. . . . Our Church steeple was blown down as also eight or ten English houses and numbers belonging to the black merchants. The whole town looked like a place that had been bombarded by an enemy. Such havoc did it make that it is impossible to find words to express it, all our beautiful shady roads laid bare, which will not be the like again this twenty years."

The fabric of the Church was much shaken by the violence of the hurricane and required to be heavily buttressed on either side. For some few years the stump of the steeple stood uncovered, save by a

## **The first Church Organ.**

roof and a row of urns or some such ornament, and then a stage of masonry was added to it, which in turn was surmounted by an elegant bellcote of wood, and so it remained until 1756.

Some five years or so after the fall of the steeple a Mr. Eyre got out from Home and presented to the Church a small organ. This instrument stood in a loft over the west entrance and had a brief existence and a truly Indian extinction. The white ants got at it, and in 1751 it was so completely demolished that not enough of it remained to furnish the measurements, which a local amateur was most anxious to obtain as a guide in the construction of a new one.

In 1743 a second chaplain was added to the Bengal Establishment in the person of a Mr. Robert Wynch about whom little is known, save that he was transferred from Madras and died after five years' ministry in Calcutta.



## Calcutta, 1

### 'fenced city.'

• THE original town of Calcutta was at one time at least a 'fenced city,' for a plan in the British Museum shows it as encircled in some way by palisades which were continued even along the river face and the edge of the creek or "ditch" now reclaimed by the frame of Hastings street. A point in this plan is thus marked: "The extensions of the palisades to the northward, from whence they go all round the town until they meet those at the southward." Every road issuing from the town was secured by a gate. It may be that these stockades were only erected around the boundaries in the Marhatta scare of 1742, when the native population almost surrounded the three towns by a moat, or they may have been much older—the question is as yet unexplored. The plan referred to is of about the date of the scare, but it contains no hint that the palisades were then recent. It traces none of the streets within the town but one of the most insignificant and names none of the boundaries; nevertheless it is a clear guide to anyone who desires still to beat the bounds of the

## **The Southern bounds.**

two hundred and twenty acres comprising the original Christian Calcutta.

Let him start from the tall building that stands out against the river blocking up the straight avenue of the Hastings street houses. Here was at the first a square earthwork sustaining a pair of bastions whence guns pointed down the river and up the creek.

The creek took a half turn round this battery and crept westwards beneath three gated bridges until the fences turned townwards from it at Fancy lane. One of the bridges opened from the burying place, occupied, when the plan was made, by the mausoleum of Charnock, and by many towers, pyramids and obelisks, and perhaps having even then the post office squeezed in at its corner. The second bridge opened from the spacious yard where sentries guarded the great bell-shaped magazine of masonry where the Company stored its gunpowder. But why should the town fences at the third bridge sharply swerve from the natural boundary of the creek? If *Fancy* be the "



ST. ANNE'S, at the time of its Demolition in the Sack of  
Calcutta in 1756.

• *From Brit. Mus. King's Maps* - <sup>CXV</sup><sub>10 G.</sub> ]



## The old bailey.

native *Phansi*, the reason is revealed—they here avoided a gallows-tree.

Fancy lane is the entrance to the bailey that ran round the whole town within the palisades. A short distance up this passage the enceinte turned again westwards parallel to the creek. It crossed the present Wellesley place, and in doing so skirted Chaplain Bellamy's garden, thence it ran up Larkin's lane and its continuation, where some *Queen* among huckstresses so waged her trade that the place took on her name and fame. Thence Barretto's lane, once called Cross street, opens on the left; this is the bailey beginning its long northward course and keeping, as it does so, at pretty even distance all along from the pilgrim road to Kalighat. The town was a settlement reserved exclusively for the three Christian nations, that is, for English, Portuguese and Armenians, with their immediate dependents, and was so laid out as to keep well clear of the busy heathen highway. Between the town and this road lay the hamlets of the butch-



## The back of the town.

ers, the scavengers and the oilmongers : local nomenclature still remembers them.

From Barretto's lane and along a bit of Mangoe lane, the passage opens into Mission row, where the memory of the old rope-walk has been supplanted by that of Kiernander's chapel and school.

Here the parish church lay open at many points in full view across the 'Park,' and the wide, sweet-water tank, and Fort William also with its handsome factory buildings gleaming white above its crimson walls. The Governor's house near the Bankshall, an ambitious edifice in its day, must also have been a prominent object from the rope-walk.

Thence the palisades ran up the Lall bazar to a gate at the "cross roads" where the cutchery was, and where the police head-quarters still are, and where native offenders were judged and suffered ; but the line of the bailey branched off at Radha's bazar.

A crooked alley, still the bailey, connects Radha's bazar with Ezra street. This was the straight back of

## **The Northern bounds.**

the town, which is continued northward along Amrattolla street—an orchard of ‘sour-khrote’s’ must have flourished hereabouts. Near by where the Greek church was built in later times, the bailey zig-zagged riverwards to Armenian street by a lane which the natives still call Hamām-gullee, though Turkish bath-houses have long ceased to exist in Calcutta. This lane passes near to the Portuguese church of “Our Lady of the Rosary.” Here, when the old plan was made, the fences seem to have been recently thrown out at an angle, by extending the Armenian street line until they met the road running past the Portuguese church. The palisades turned round the burying place of the Armenians, within which stood their church of St. Nazareth, much the same as now to look at, except that perhaps the nave had then not yet been extended to meet the steeple.

Leaving this the bailey ran in and out down to the river by streets named after the sellers of reed-mats and scouring-brushes, who traded at that end of the town, and the tail of the Old China Bazar.

## **Sutanuti out of fashion.**

The northern-most limit of the town's river face was in the present Raja Woodmand street.

The Strand road, as we now see it, did not exist in Bellamy's time ; it has nearly all been reclaimed from the river. It was then, north of the Fort, a narrow roadway of very uneven line, bordered all along by the garden walls of bungalows and of a few upper-storied houses. Beyond the Fort it was broken by ship-building slips or small docks. There was a gated ghat at the foot of each of the principal streets.

As Calcutta became settled, Sutanuti became abandoned by the English as a place of abode. There remained indeed near its northernmost corner the Tollyganj of Briercliffe's day, a pleasure garden, where once it was the height of gentility for the Company's covenanted servants to take their wives for an evening stroll or moonlight fête. Gradually, however, other recreations and other resorts grew into fashion ; Surman's supplanted 'Perrin's,' and Bellamy lived to see a gunpowder factory in the grounds. As he

**Charles  
Webber.**

rode out to Perrin's beside his wife's palanquin along what is now Clive Street, he would have marked how between the new, stockaded, Christian town and citadel and the old defenceless village of the cotton-market lay the gardens, orchards and houses of the thriving native middle-men, to whom English methods of trade then, and of revenue administration later, gave so ample scope for fortune-making.



SHORTLY after Robert Wynch's death, which was in 1748, the factory council appointed as his successor, that is, in the second or junior chaplaincy, a clergyman who happened to be visiting the settlement, perhaps as tutor to some wealthy youth. This man was Charles Webber, B.D., a fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. No advantage of rank or learning however could counterbalance with the company one intolerable defect in his qualifications; he had presumed to visit its factories without its license. Consequently on receiving advice of this local appoint-

## Robert Mapletoft.

ment the Court immediately ordered Webber's deportation and sent out another clergyman in his place.

The Revd. Robert Mapletoft, who succeeded



Mapletoft.

Webber, was a young Cambridge graduate of 26, and one of the most interesting persons in the ecclesiastical history of Bengal. He came of an old family of priests, his paternal ancestors since the reign of Queen Elizabeth

having been all in Holy Orders.

His great grandmother, Susanna *née* Collet, was a near relation by blood of the well-known Nicholas Ferrars of Little Gidding. His grandfather had been brought up under the influence of the Little Gidding household, and was a High Churchman and the close friend of Robert Nelson.

Considering the traditions of his family it is fair to assume that Mapletoft brought the best High Church principles to the service of religion in Bengal. But



CHARLES WESTON, Clerk at St. John's Chapel and Benefactor  
of the Parish.

*From the Original Painting at St. John's. See page 56.*



## Luxury and Levity.

the old days when, at least the outward decencies of religion were enforced in the Company's factories were already gone by, that lethargy from which the Evangelical and the Catholic revivals of the present century have violently awakened the English Church had already crept on. High Churchmen had lapsed into non-jurors, Low Churchmen had lost their piety. The factory was getting more populous and wealthy every year, and vicious luxury was growing to such excess that the Court became alarmed at it, and wrote out letter after letter in severe expostulation. Their protests however were received with levity and ridiculed as "Preaching." At length the Court in 1754 sent out peremptory orders with a view to moral reformation, forbidding expensive living to its superior servants, and even the keeping of a palanquin, horse or chaise to its writers, requiring a report on public morals to be sent home once a quarter and commanding the Governor and Council and all other civilians and soldiers to attend Church every Sunday. The older discipline of daily worship, long neglected



**' As the days  
of Noë were.**

being thus officially abandoned. The command requiring attendance at divine worship, the Council promised to see carried out ; it appears to have returned no reply with respect to the others.

Extravagance and vice gradually so enervated the factory as to lead to reckless negligence of self-defence ; until it was too late. Like the settlers in Laish, " they dwelt after the manner of the Zidonians quiet and secure, for there was none in the land possessing power of restraint, that might put them to shame in anything." Until the enemy came " and smote them with the edge of the sword ; and burnt their city with fire ; and there was no deliverer."

But to return to Mapletoft. Soon after his arrival Bellamy made over to him the special charge of the school, and by his energy the invested charity stock was soon enlarged by fresh donations, and the school regulations improved.

Besides learning Portuguese Mapletoft early aspired to become master of Persian, and suggested his being sent to reside for a time at the Court of

**Mistress  
Mapletoft.**

the Nawab at Murshidabad for this purpose. The directors at home welcomed the suggestion, for they considered that if Mapletoft could succeed in qualifying himself to teach "Persick," as they called it, to their younger writers, he might do them signal service. However, during the year occupied by correspondence on the matter Mapletoft met a widow of pronounced non-juring ideas, whose charms prevailed to put Murshidabad and the Persick language out of his head. This lady was a native of St. Helena, she had survived two husbands, had children by both, and was in easy circumstances. By this third wedlock she had two children and was near upon giving birth to another when the Nawab besieged Calcutta.

Of all the persons connected with St. Anne's Mrs. Mapletoft was the only one who survived the terrible experiences of 1756. She upheld the cause of the Pretender to her latest days and used, so tradition says, to fling a pinch of snuff over her shoulder in contempt of the Hanoverians when King George was prayed for in Church:

## **The Bellamy family.**

Mrs. Mapletoft continued to reside in Calcutta through the Governments of Clive and Hastings. In old age she returned to her native island where she died in 1792. Her epitaph is to be read in St. James's Church, Jamestown, St. Helena, and assures the reader that here was "no common example, no obscure character." "Stranger" (so exclaims the stone). "If the name of parent, child or friend appertains to thee, devoutly pray that its duties may be embraced with as much zeal, and fulfilled with as much credit as distinguished the career and sanctified the end of the subject of this inscription. So may'st thou, not by the world's suffrage, but by the Creator's grace, beam immortal!"

Bellamy had also married a widow, and by her, on Mapletoft's arrival, he had five or six surviving children, one of these at the time of the siege was coroner of Calcutta and another was a Lieutenant in the Company's service. It is probable that by this time the Bellamy family was in easy though not affluent circumstances.



## The defence of the Fort.

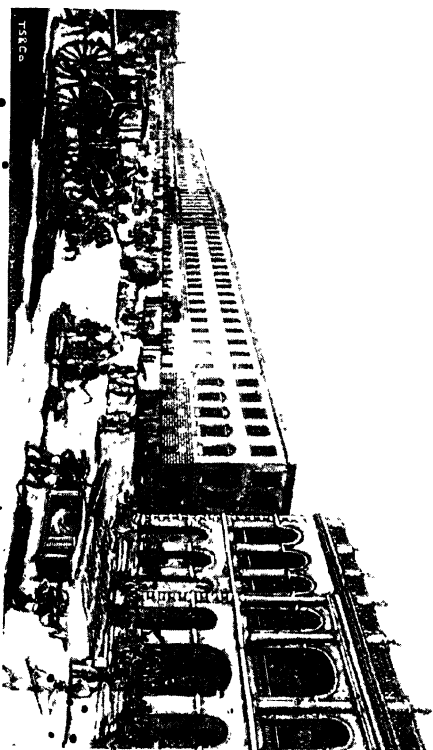
TRINITY Sunday, June 13, 1756, must have been the last Sunday on which Divine Service was offered at St. Anne's, though the daily office may have continued until the Friday. The early days of the week were occupied at Fort William with the military preparations so long and so disastrously deferred. Among these was the enrolment of the Company's civilians, the European inhabitants and other Christians as a Volunteer Militia. In this force Mapletoft was commissioned as a Captain-lieutenant.

Up to the Friday the whole English force was employed in resisting the Nawab's army. On that day all English outposts were driven in, and the Nawab's musketry dominated, from the Church roof and adjacent houses, the Fort in which the survivors of the factory establishment and dependents had taken refuge. The women and children were sent on board the shipping, but Mrs. Mapletoft with three other ladies clung to their husbands till nearly midnight and then were forced away. All that night the preparations for meeting the now inevitable storm-

## **Fate of Mapletoft.**

ing of the Fort went on, Mapletoft worked like a coolie cutting open cotton bales and filling sacks with the contents to make a breastwork on the ramparts.

On the Saturday morning the works in hand, being somehow finished, permission was given to those who had wives and children to pay a brief visit to the ships. Mapletoft hastened to his family and had been with them but a little while when the Governor and the Commandant of Fort William, themselves escaping from the town, ordered every ship to cast off her moorings, and thus Mapletoft was carried off, with the rest to Fulta, where he soon fell a victim to pestilence and privations. His wife escaped to Chinsurah, where the Dutch Governor and his wife befriended her and became godparents to the infant, whom she shortly gave birth to, and whom she named after its mother and godparents, Constantia-Adriana-Sally. This girl eventually became the wife of an Aide-de-Camp of Governor-General Warren Hastings and bore him seventeen children.



The Old Court House, 1785.  
 Showing, beyond Writers' Buildings, the Wall of the Old Fort, Holywell's Black  
 Hole, Monument, and the Roof of St. John's Chapel.  
*From Parry's Travels, See Pages 37, 38, 62, 62, 62.*



## **Black Hole**

### **victims.**

Bellamy and his son John were among the 146 unfortunates who were crowded into the Black Hole. Holwell says that when he felt stupor coming on after several hours of agony in that awful chamber, he laid himself down by "that gallant old man the Reverend Mr. Gervas Bellamy, who lay dead with his son, the lieutenant, hand in hand, near the southernmost wall of the prison."

Holwell in his narrative does honour to another gallant officer of the Church, Thomas Leech, "the Company's Smith and Clerk of the Parish." This man had provided a boat and means of escape to it for Holwell and himself, but on Holwell's refusing to quit the garrison, he insisted on remaining by his side and was found dead next morning among the suffocated. His slaves, a boy and a girl, survived him and realized together about 150 rupees when sold the next year by Holwell, who remitted the proceeds to their late master's widow in England with a half-year's wages found remaining due to her husband as parish clerk.



**Richard  
Cobbe.**

In the sack of the town the Portuguese and Armenian churches escaped, but Saint Anne's was utterly destroyed.



ON the 2nd of January 1757 Calcutta was recovered by Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive. With Watson on the *Kent* was the chaplain of his squadron, Richard Cobbe, who on the ensuing Lady-day became incumbent of the parish.

It appears likely that Cobbe never officiated publicly in Calcutta by reason of being incapacitated by wounds received at the siege of Chandernagore—where gallant Billy Speke “lost his leg and life.” He survived but four or five months. Of this good man little is known save that he was the son of the energetic Chaplain of Bombay, who promoted the building of the first Church there, and that he kept journals which surgeon of the *Kent* freely used in his contemporary narrative, and that he left his heart with a lady in Woolwich.

## **The Portuguese Church.**

One of his adventures with the admiral, is curious enough to mention. The *Kent* was lying off Fort St. David and the Nawab of Arcot was paying her a visit. Among the officers, Mohammed Ali noticed Cobbe, who at the admiral's request was wearing his cassock with gown and bands, three cornered hat and wig. On learning his rank and office the Nawab saluted him, and asked leave to make him acquainted with his own chaplain; this worthy, to the amusement of all present, soon appeared. He proved to be a half-crazy fakir with an immense beard and knotted hair who save for a quantity of iron chains and a loincloth went nearly naked. "The two holy men," writes the teller of the story, "congratulated each other on their respective office, and then seated themselves with the rest of the company."

If Cobbe ever conducted public worship in Calcutta, it would have been in the Portuguese Church at Moorghihat, a brick building dating from 1720, designed in the plainest Iberian style and lighted by windows high up in the walls. It stood North and

## **The Missionary Kierlander.**

South and had a round porch covered by a dome, which in turn sustained a little belfry turret, in the midst of its eastern side.

Their Church was available for English use because the Portuguese clergy had been expelled from the settlement and the exercise of Roman rites interdicted.

This proscription of popish worship was a political measure to which the Court at home gave a general though qualified approval.

In the Portuguese Church at any rate officiated Cobbe's successor Thomas Northcote who resigned at the close of the year. The church was both inconveniently situated and much dilapidated, and many wanted the theatre to be taken over for church purposes instead, and this the court approved. Nevertheless the Moorghihatta Church was retained and put into some sort of repair, and for three years served for English worship. Henry Butler, the next chaplain, had it decorated, or at least the altar, with "broadcloth and lace," and on the arrival of Mr. J. Z. Kierlander, the celebrated Swedish missionary in the

## **Butler, Moore and Cape.**

employment of the S. P. C. K., he lent it to him for his evangelistic lectures on Sunday afternoons. Here probably was baptized that son of Kiernander who eventually brought his father to insolvency,—a grand christening, for Colonel Clive and his wife, with Mr. and Mrs. Watts were sponsors on the occasion. The latter by the last of her five weddings became the celebrated “Begum Johnson,” the leader of Calcutta Society until her death in 1812.

By some confusion of correspondence a Mr. Moore and a Mr. Cape now arrived both as chaplains of the Presidency. The establishment then nominally consisted of but two clergymen. However, all three remained for a time in the Bengal service. The two new arrivals served at the Portuguese Church, while Butler went upcountry on field service with Clive—and was with the army, probably in Behar, when the latter returned home in January 1760. Shortly after this Moore was transferred to Fort Marlborough at his own request, and Butler returned to Fort William. It is a curious proof of the rapidity with which wealth

### St. John's Chapel.

and consequent lavish expenditure had already begun to rule again in Calcutta at this time, that though the salary of 4 Chaplain had just been raised from £100 to £230 a year Mr. Moore nevertheless begged for this transfer, since he said he and his family could not live in Bengal on his pay.



EARLY in 1760 the general discontent of the parishioners with their place of worship brought sufficient pressure to bear upon the Council to cause it to record a most naïve minute, in its proceedings of the 24th of March,—that it “took into consideration the unwholesomeness and dampness of the church now in use, as well as the injustice of detaining it from the Portuguese.” Accordingly the ruinous Eastern gateway of the old Fort was ordered to be examined—(The new Fort William was then rapidly taking shape, where once the Gobindpur village had existed) with a view to the room over it,—if such be the meaning of the resolution—being restored and fitted up as a



CHARLES SEVIA, last Registrar of the Mayor's Court and first of the  
Supreme Court. Sidesman of the Parish, 1787.

[From an Original Painting at St. John's. See page 101.]



## **The Patron Saint.**

chapel, "till such time as the chapel designed to be built in the Fort be erected." The upshot of this was that part of the buildings immediately south of this gate and abutting upon the Black Hole was, at a cost, so it is said, of Rs. 2,500, turned into a chapel for the presidency use. When this was completed—Mr. Long says, it was in the July of 1760—the Portuguese Church was handed back to its former incumbent, Friar Caetano de Madre de Dios, of Bandel. The existing registers of the Moorghihatta Church, now the Roman Catholic Cathedral, contain no trace by any chance allusion to the English occupation. There is a gap in them answering to the period, and that is all.

This Chapel served as the Presidency Church for twenty-seven years. It was called—we know this on the sole testimony of a scrap of contemporary Vestry minutes in the records of Government—*Saint John's Chapel*. Now, since the present church—of which the consecration deeds are lost—was certainly called after it; in order to determine the present patron saint



## **The Freemasons and the Chapel.**

—the Evangelist or the Baptist,—the dedication of the chapel must be sought out. It was an old opinion that the freemasons had provided the opening ceremonial of one or other of the temples of worship which preceded the present St. John's. And it happened that the construction and opening of the chapel coincided with Mr. Holwell's six months Presidentship. Mr. Holwell was a mason of high rank, and it was he who had promoted the revival of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bengal the previous year. In this lodge one of the churchwardens was one of the senior officials, and also a Mr. Mapletoft, of the family doubtless of the devoted chaplain of that name, who had perished four years before at Fulta. It is extremely likely that the dedication of St. John's Chapel included masonic ceremonial, and perhaps took place not in July, but on June 24th, St. John the Baptist's day. The present St. John's was consecrated on a recurrence of this festival. If the conjecture respecting the chapel be correct, then the Baptist must, without doubt, be acknowledged as the saint in whose

## Works of piety and charity.

pious memory it was intended to glorify God in the existing parish church.

The roof of the chapel, which was of a high pitch, an unusual architectural feature at that time in Bengal, is shown in two of Daniell's views taken about 1785.



THE public exercise of religion was thus again, by the latter part of 1760, decently provided for the three Christian nations represented in the settlement — English, Portuguese and Armenian,—had each again its own house of prayer, while the S. P. C. K. Mission flourished so well that Mr. Butler was able to write to the Society testifying to Mr. Kiernander's zeal, and urging that an assistant should be sent out to him especially for the school teaching, and engaging that local liberality should certainly enlarge the latter's stated stipend. By this time the Vestry had assigned its twenty charity boys to the care of the Mission.

Thus alms-giving was joining hands, as it should do with prayer. Instincts of humanity also were becom-

## Riernander's

### 'Fortitude.'

ing more sensitive than of old, as may be presumed from a minute of the Council at the end of 1760. The established method of punishing murder in the settlement had been by whipping the criminal to death, a penalty which, however awful, was still more merciful, as being far swifter, than the contemporary usage in the Dutch Indies of impaling the criminal,—such wretches (unless it rained) sometimes lingering conscious for a week. The Calcutta authorities now changed their local form of capital execution into that favoured by the Indian princes—sudden destruction at the mouth of a cannon. They gave, however, an ungracious reason for the mercy. Whipping to death, they stated, was not sufficiently deterrent, as not being sufficiently public.

The next year, 1761, which brought the news of the demise of King George II, when the chapel was draped in mourning, saw the deaths of both the chaplains and the wife of the missionary. As for the latter, *Asiaticus* says, he had “the fortitude not to give himself to vain lamentation,” for “the remembrance

**Butler's  
estate.**

of all his former sorrows was obliterated in the silken embraces of opulent beauty,"—he means that exactly nine months later he united himself in marriage with a wealthy widow. Mr. Butler died intestate after a very painful, lingering illness. He was buried it seems at night, for 200 torches were burned at his funeral. His estate, which proved considerably involved, was administered by Mr. Warren Hastings, then a member of Council, as his friend and creditor.

It is often alleged that the company's chaplains in the last century made fortunes by trading. This is an accusation which the writer has been at great pains to sift, at least, so far as concerned Bengal, and Butler proves to be the only clergyman from the time of Evans at Hughly before the foundation of Calcutta, down to the expiration of the Hon. I. E. C., respecting whom there is any trace of his having personally dealt in merchandize. His salary, though recently raised, was insufficient; the cost of living was increasing in Calcutta with a steady rapidity. He had tried to obtain more pay but failed, and it was long before the days

### **Private trade.**

of pensions. He borrowed over 26,000 rupees and invested the money in goods, chiefly China silk, rice, opium and salt. The adventure resulted only in disaster, for after all his possessions were sold off, including his house, and his debts paid, less than a thousand rupees was found to the credit of his estate. Among his effects was a good library of theology, an astrological instrument, and a microscope, ten wigs and two gowns, fifteen sheep, a horse, two bullocks and palanquin.

The chaplains all made home remittances. Many of them had parents at home to be assisted and children to be educated. Usually these remittances were made by Company's bills, but sometimes probably they were made in goods by the Company's ships, such shipments being termed in the accounts "private trade." Few now, and certainly no one then, would have blamed a clergyman for so investing money. Again, every season a syndicate of residents would send out a ship-load of goods as a trading adventure to China and the Straits. In such investments the

There is a great deal of  
very good paper in the  
country.

March 17<sup>th</sup>

The old school is a good one, but  
the new one is a very good one.

2

February 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

March 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

April 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

May 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

June 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

July 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

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The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

June 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.

July 17<sup>th</sup>

The new school is a very good one,  
and the old one is a very good one.



## Samuel Staveland.

chaplains probably often took shares—and if they did so were in so far traders. But the only discoverable example of a Bengal chaplain of the last century himself buying and selling goods for profit is the case of Henry Butler.

A Mr. Staveland followed Butler. He had served with the Royal Navy, and on the Madras Establishment. To him is due the improvement and enlargement of the Court House at a cost of over Rs. 23,000, and the raising of the rent paid by Government for it to Rs. 2,000 a year, with a prospect of earning much more for the benefit of the charity fund. Both Butler and Cape had warmly supported the S. P. C. K. Mission and, of Staveland, Kiernander wrote home that his presence made up to him for the loss of these two friends, for "with an equal good zeal he ardently endeavours to promote the cause of Christianity." He fell a victim to the epidemic of 1762;—one of those periodical visitations which made seamen suppose that 'Calcutta' was but another way of saying 'Golgotha'—the place of a skull.



## **William Hirst.**

To fill the second incumbency, the Council appointed, subject to home approval, the chaplain who had arrived with Admiral Cornish, William Hirst. He was a fellow of the Royal Society, and altogether one of the most accomplished men who ever belonged to the clergy of Bengal. He had visited Lisbon shortly after the earthquake and made a careful drawing of the devastated city; was present at the sieges of Pondicherry and Vellore, and while staying at Government House, Madras, in June, 1761, he was able to observe a Transit of Venus, and of this he sent a particular account to the Royal Society. In 1762 Bengal was visited by two violent earthquakes, and Hirst's careful accounts of these, together with his observations of an eclipse of the sun, appear also in the Society's Transactions. The next year, 1763, took place the hideous massacre at Patna, when 150 gallant Englishmen were treacherously slaughtered by the dethroned Nawab of Bengal. When news of this reached Calcutta, a fortnight's general mourning was observed, beginning with a day of fasting; special

### **Inconvenience of the Chapel.**

prayers were offered and a sermon was preached by Mr. Hirst (or else by Mr. Bowen, then just arrived as his colleague) in St. John's Chapel.

By that time, through increase of population, and let us hope, by reason also of an improvement in the religious tone of the settlement, St. John's Chapel was found to be overcrowded Sunday after Sunday. The clergy and churchwardens began to press Government to provide the promised church in the new Fort William. It was not only overcrowded but even noisy. Work went on on Sundays both in the Fort, and on the quay behind it, and it was even said the service was thus occasionally interrupted. The next year the Vestry presented a petition on the subject to the Council, but nothing was done; indeed, Calcutta waited until 1787 for a permanent St. John's, and until 1826 for the Fort William Church.

• In 1764 Hirst resigned and returned home. With his close friend Mr. Vansittart, late Governor of Bengal, he continued his scientific works—which include an

**William  
Parry.**

elaborate map of the three provinces of the Presidency and observations on a second Transit of Venus. When in, 1769, the Bengal commission of three supervisors was appointed, —one of whom was Vansittart— Hirst was sent with them as their chaplain, and with them shared their unrecorded fate. When he sailed, a friend, James Kirkpatrick, addressed a Latin ode to him and printed it in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.



WHEN Hirst resigned, a Mr. Parry was sole chaplain, for Bowen's name disappears from the records after three months' service, and the next year had an unhappy and unique experience. He was dismissed by the Council for solemnizing the marriage of one of its members without permission first obtained from the President, Lord Clive. Lord Clive himself urged that he should be reinstated immediately after dismissal; but this was disapproved by the other councillors (excepting no doubt the member in whose cause he had transgressed.) Lord Clive, however,

### Privileges of Chaplains.

communicated privately with the Court at home, with the result that Parry two years later was restored to his chaplaincy. Still, during the whole of that period, he performed his clerical functions, and participated in the temporal privileges of a superior servant of the company.

That was the period of the much criticized Salt, Betel and Tobacco Monopoly sanctioned by Clive. If Mr. Bolt's *Considerations* be correct, Mr. Parry's two-thirds share must have produced a profit of over £2,800 the first year and over £2,200 the next. Another privilege, in which chaplains shared in Parry's time, was the right of buying Madeira from the ships at twenty per cent. over cost price. This wine was regarded in Calcutta as the safe alternative to Lall Dighi water, which was wisely distrusted as a beverage even when fined by alum. The existence of this right will account for no less than two pipes and one chest of Madeira being in his cellar at his death.

Parry lived to assist at the foundation of Mr. Kierlander's Mission Church in 1765, and to "consecrate"

## Calcutta in 1768.

the Park Street south cemetery in 1768. °The Council urged him to do this, because of the sickly season. It must have been one of his last public acts, since a long continued sickness carried him off early in the next year.

A lady who wrote from Calcutta in June of this year said that "the only apology for a church" in the town was "some rooms" in the old Fort, "where divine service is sometimes performed." And the Council wrote home that Mr. Parry was often unable to perform his duties. It is, anyhow, quite plain that the regular daily morning and evening prayer of older days had become abandoned.

Calcutta was at that time, so the lady just quoted tells us, "as awkward a place as can be conceived." Mansions and mean houses, bazar, gardens, warehouses, straw huts and dead walls were so mingled that they seemed to have been thrown together by accident. Plainly the evil tradition of contempt of method in laying out the settlement—which Charnock in the beginning had omitted to check—had gone on





## Houses and Furniture.

and ruled the town. So slovenly were the habits of even the wealthy that they permitted their servants to build hovels of mud and straw to sleep and cook in right against their own houses. Daniell's pictures show that this insanitary and ugly custom still ruled eighteen years later.

In 1768 the Armenians and Portuguese still kept to their own districts of the town, but the latter were no longer permitted to traverse the streets with their religious processions. The clerks, cooks and ayahs of that time were largely drawn from the Portuguese-speaking community. Building was then going on with great rapidity and under extreme pressure—so quickly were English residents multiplying. The houses presented uniformly within panelled plaster walls and matted floors ; but it was very difficult to fit them up, so exorbitantly expensive was furniture of all sorts. When people paid visits they took not only their bedding, but their folding cots as well. The more wealthy residents had houses and gardens both north of the town and at Alipur. The Governor



**Thomas  
Yate.**

often received his guests at Belvedere. The "course" on the Maidan was the chief resort for exercise, because the habits of earlier days, when everyone who had the means went out on the river in the evenings to fish, shoot wildfowl and eat the air, seem to have been abandoned. It is curious that at the time the popular etymology of *course* derived it from the native *cos*, because it compassed two miles ! The town was reputed unhealthy, and the old burial ground had the previous year been found to be full.



**W**HEN Parry's sickness became chronic, and as there was no other chaplain (for a junior colleague sent out to him had survived the climate, like Cape and perhaps Bowen, but a few months), the Council took upon itself to appoint as second chaplain a Mr. Thomas Yate, who had just arrived on board the *Talbot* as tutor to the son of Sir Charles Hudson, her commander. Of this man sufficient record exists

### **The first Garrison Chaplain.**

to reveal him as gentle, amiable and good-natured ; contented, pious and conscientious, yet with about, as we may presume, as just, an estimation of his sacerdotal stewardship as was prevalent at the time. His memory lingered long in the settlement, and a writer early in the present century has this enthusiastic remark about him : "That man would have added dignity to the crosier and the hallowed lawn."

When the Court heard of Mr. Yate's local appointment, they ordered him to be deported home at once. The Council disregarded the order, and made him instead first chaplain of the garrison in Fort William, where he doubtless held his parade services in the open air. The Court, however, continued to insist on the deportation, and in 1774 Yate was in England again. Three years later he was regularly appointed to his former charge, and he sailed for India, in a French ship on which he suffered hardships. "The poultry" on board, wrote an English fellow-passenger of Yate's, "are so old that hungry bull-dogs would

## Yate a prisoner of war.

find it a labour to tear the fowls in pieces." A worse misfortune, however, than French sea-rations was the breaking out of war, which converted Yate and his companion into prisoners. They were not allowed to land in "the delicious Isle of Bourbon," but the islanders came off to stare at them, "as if they had been monsters confined in a den." Transferred to another ship, they began to suffer real hardships. Through her leaky decks rain poured into the cabins, within which scurvy and bile confined them. Vermin infested them, and cockroaches "deeply wounded" their flesh. From this horrible vessel they were taken into the jail at Port Louis in the Mauritius, where their sufferings were so aggravated by cruelty that Yate begged the soldiers on guard to blow his brains out. From Port Louis they were embarked for France, but managed to get left at the Cape. By this time news of Yate's misery had reached Calcutta, and the Governor-General, Mr. Warren Hastings, interested himself in his release. He arrived, however, in Calcutta without assistance and recommenced his

## The Mission Church.

duties in the garrison ; at these he persevered until his death in 1782



THE year after Parry's death, Yate received as his colleague Dr. James Burn and when he himself was transferred to the garrison, one the best known of all the chaplains previous to the bishopric, arrived as Dr. Burn's junior in the person of William Johnson, to whose energy we owe the present St. John's.

While Yate, Burn, and Johnson, served together in Calcutta, the prosperity of the S. P. C. K. Mission reached its zenith. On Advent Sunday, 1770, Mr. Kiernander dedicated by the name of Beth-Tephilla the church he had completed for the Mission. Five clergymen in Roman Orders attached themselves to his organization after abjuring the Pope, and converts became numerous.

Wealth had been advancing in Calcutta by leaps and bounds. Chaplains' salaries had risen to Rs. 535

**The glass of .  
fashion.**

a month, and fees had so much increased that sometimes the minister would receive twenty gold mohurs at a wedding and sometimes five at a baptism. The Court House rent had swelled to C. R. 4,160 a year by 1775, the year before Johnson began the Church-building movement.

Dating from about this time are the letters of another lady who visited Calcutta, and from these we secure a glimpse of St. John's Chapel in its last days, but alas! only from the fashionable and worldly point of view.

"I have been to church, my dear girl," she writes, "in my new palanquin (the mode of genteel conveyance)." And she continues that "the edifice dignified at present with the appellation of a church does not deserve notice. It is situated at the old Fort, and consists solely of a ground-floor, with an arrangement of plain pews; nor is the Governor himself much better accommodated than the rest; and of course the Padra, as the clergyman is called, has little to boast of: the windows are, however,

your letter.  
Thursday Morning

Dear Sir

I am just favoured with your note  
concerning my subscription to the Church; and,  
though I understand it to be written by you  
officially, as secretary to the Committee of  
Subscribers, yet it will be pleasant to  
us both, for me to answer you in your  
private capacity, and you will be kind  
enough to report the substance of my  
answer to the Committee.

When the rev. Mr. Johnson applied to me  
on the subject, I told him openly that, as  
a private individual, I certainly should  
not subscribe at all to the building of a  
new church; because, from my own  
observations and from those of others, I  
could not think a large place of worship  
necessary at Calcutta; and I never thought  
a magnificent one either necessary or  
proper anywhere; but that, if it were  
necessary or expedient, it was the duty  
of the company, not of individuals, to



inside the settlement with a view to  
these for divine service, and that, on a  
due representation of the case, they would  
not fail to have it greeted. I believe  
I added that as to myself, I should  
be anxious to pass my Sundays at my garden  
and should only attend the public service  
on Christmas day. At the beginning of this  
conversation Mr. Johnson said that R. H.  
Lambert had desired his name to be put  
down, and I said, that, though I would  
not subscribe as an individual, yet I  
would contribute what the other ladies  
did, but that I would follow them  
not lead. All this I had the honor  
of repeating to the gentlemen, who  
surrounded me with their compliments  
in court-house; or at least the  
substance of it: I would certainly  
have subscribed, as a judge if it  
had been general on the bench, and  
would then (for I meant no more)  
have followed in R. H. Lambert's  
and Mr. Hyde; but I never thought  
of guiding myself by Mr. Robert's  
intentions in this individual capacity;  
since he may, in the time to come,





different points or may have opinions on  
the subject which I have not. So little glad  
I think of following him, that on my  
return to the Presidency I told him I  
should not be a subscriber, as he bench  
had not taken up the measure. Had  
Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Hyde subscribed?  
would not have been the only expenditure  
in such a case, but I understand that  
when the committee went from me to Mr.  
Hyde, he designed contributing, and  
probably for some of the reasons  
which have weighed with me. There  
being my reluctance, my name would  
add little to the list, and the sum  
is too inconsiderable to be an object  
with the subscribers or with me. I will  
take care however, that the sums of 500  
in R. at least, shall be applied, with  
all due speed to one of the principal  
purposes for which the Church itself  
is intended and will so far, though not  
a contributor to its walls, promote  
the end of their erection.

I am, with great esteem,  
dear Sir, your obedient and  
affectionate servant  
Wm. Jones.

Letter of SIR WILLIAM JONES to the Church Building Committee, 1784.

[See page 90.]



## Female sensibilities

“verandas which are pleasing in their appearance, independent of the blessing of air enjoyed through them.”—“At Calcutta,” we are further told, “Sunday is the only day of public devotion, though the Padra’s salary is liberal and his perquisites immense.”—She describes the weddings of the time as sumptuous ceremonies in private houses, and tells us that the chapel bell was a “deep, melancholy-toned one,” which was tolled on the occasion of funerals; but “all funeral processions,” she says, “are concealed as much as possible from the sight of the ladies that the vivacity of their tempers may not be wounded.” Nevertheless she witnessed and describes a funeral of some wealthy gentleman. Neither hearses nor mutes were to be had in Calcutta, and the coffins of the wealthiest were borne to what is now Park Street on men’s shoulders. She tells us that at Church “ancient sanction” allowed any gentleman without introduction to meet any lady at the entrance as she stepped from her palanquin and, taking her hand, to lead her thus to her seat. The gallants who availed themselves

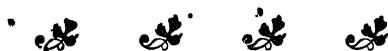
## Brides from Europe.

of this antique usage were mostly "old fellows," who chiefly made a point of "repairing to the holy dome"—(by which she means going to church) on the Sundays after Europe ships had arrived, and not seldom a choice for life had thus been made, the captivating new arrivals "becoming brides in the utmost possible splendour," having 'their rank instantaneously established, and are visited and paid every honour to which the consequence of their husbands entitles them." The young lady, however, who writes the letter says she herself was not thus accosted because her father was with her, and her intimates surrounded her on the "first public exhibition of her person."

In this inflated and flippant style—which she proceeds further to exercise on a picture of the cemeteries—and in the frivolities and formalities it reflects, we receive, it must be acknowledged, a disagreeable impression of the social manners of Calcutta of a century and a quarter ago. Still we should do wrong to the mass of quiet Christian folk in the town if we

### Petition for a permanent church.

were to let ourselves be prejudiced against them, the great majority, by the ironical colours in which a romantic and flighty spinster depicts the wealthy section of a society amid which she was still a stranger.



IT had been intended when the present Fort William was being constructed to build a church for the Presidency within its enclosure, and St. John's Chapel in the disused fort was only a makeshift. By 1776 "the want of a proper place for the celebration of divine worship and the exercise of the Ministerial Function" became so pressing, owing to the steadily increasing English population, that Chaplain Johnson petitioned the Council to provide the long awaited permanent building. His letter is a long one;—among other arguments he urges the interesting plea that the honour of the Faith among the heathen would be served by a dignified place of English worship.

"It cannot be requisite, on this occasion," he says, "to expatiate largely to Christians and members of

## Testimony before the heathen.

the Church of England of the necessity of showing forth His praise and joining publicly of His worship, Whom it is our greatest glory to adore and obey; and it is equally needless to urge, particularly to gentlemen of knowledge and discernment, the reasons which temporal prudence will suggest for paying a more than ordinary regard to the external rites and solemn ceremonies of religion in the sight of the natives of Bengal, who having been subject for ages to the dominion of despotic princes, withheld from oppression by no ties, but those of religion, will from beholding our pure worship of the One Almighty God, inculcating implicit reliance on His Justice, Mercy and Dispensations, be taught to believe in His Providence and to place the firmest confidence in the Government of the English nation, that in His strength has been introduced and fixed over such extensive dominion of the Earth."

It is very evident from the rest of this letter that the writer had not the least idea that St. Anne's had been built by public subscription. Its foundations

## Consecration of St. Anne's, forgotten.

were when he wrote doubtless, still visible, for its site was lying vacant. All memory of its consecration had disappeared, and its site together with all the land intervening between it and the Court House was nine months after Mr. Johnson made his appeal treated as *coomar* or waste land and so the absolute property of the Company: for on November 18th, 1776, the whole was granted to one Thomas Lyons for erecting what is now known as "Writers' Buildings." Had the chaplain been aware of the facts he certainly would have said in his letter: "The Company's servants built the former church, and Government undertook to protect its site as sacred and separate from profane uses for ever. One Nawab destroyed it, but his successor lavishly reimbursed the Settlement for all such losses and devastations. The Government must still hold the restitution money reckoned against the ruination of St. Anne's. Let Government therefore replace the building; and on the old site which is inalienable to profane uses."



## Two Celebrated weddings.

The Council approved Mr. Johnson's proposal and referred home for leave to build the church, but the Court returned no reply, and the project waited for seven years more before taking definite shape.

During this interval occurred several events which affected the Company's Ecclesiastical Establishment in Bengal. The salaries of the clergy had risen to Rs. 800, but they were now increased to Rs. 1,200 a month. Church fees must have been very lucrative because the chaplains obtained leave to send home up to £1,000 a year each through the Company's bills. The Establishment was enlarged from three to six: it thus comprised two presidency chaplains, one garrison chaplain and three chaplains of brigades; one of these latter bore the title, not long continued of "Chaplain-general." Two weddings of fame also are recorded during this interval: at Hughly, Miss Werlée of Chandernagore to Mr. Francis Grand (the lady became afterwards celebrated as the Princess Talleyrand), and at Calcutta, Governor-General Warren Hastings to "Miss Anna-Maria-Appolonia Chapu-

Bangalore 17th Decr 1841.

Gentlemen

I have received his letter which you did me the  
hon. to write to me dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of February, with the  
two printed plans to which it refers for an explanation  
of the proposed change in the Constitution of the Church. I  
am sensible of your attention, but as I shall be at too great  
a distance even to admit of the like references hereafter,  
and being best provided of an implicit Dependence on  
your judgment, I hoped therefore that you would  
consider my Communion with any future arrangement  
to be the prosecution of the work now going on, or rather  
is & to be by a similar Communication. On this  
occasion I have the satisfaction of joining entirely  
in your opinion, both for the reasons which  
you have assigned, & because I have <sup>and</sup> suggested that  
the thinking of resting peacefully on our old Founda-  
tion would mean the retard of a separation of



of the Water in that Place where the soil has  
been applied to the natural Soil.

I cannot refuse the pleasing Distinction  
which you are willing to confer on me by putting  
my Name on the first Stone that will be  
laid for the Building; although I must in Justice  
disclaim any personal Merits that could in such  
an Instance entitle me to it.

I beg leave to take this Occasion of  
acknowledging the Receipt of a former Letter  
which has me the Honor to write to me  
when I was in Scotland, & which my sister  
Miss's & early Friendship presented me from  
commencing. It will be sufficient to inform you  
upon the subject of it that I had no other Chance in  
the Composition of my second Letter for the new  
I wish, than in the slight Suggestion of a  
new







## THE EARLY CHURCH BUILDINGS AND THE NEW CHURCH

semin." The former marriage was solemnized in a private residence, and the latter almost certainly so. The parish registers since 1758 are happily preserved, but during this interval the whole of the other records of the vestry were mysteriously lost. This seven years also saw the decay of the missionary. Mr. Kiermauder's natural powers and the consequent degeneration of the mission, although the S. P. C. K. sent him a colleague—the Rev. Dr. Diemer. This new missionary married a daughter of Charles Weston, then parish clerk, and their one child was christened after the old puritan manner "Fear-God-Christman."



[It was the great Governor-General himself who gave the first practical impetus to the church-building theme, for in 1782 he suggested to the Maharaja, Raja Krishna Dev, a wealthy proprietor who then held the *malikana* (a sort of manorial lordship) of the village of the north of the town, to give the old church



## The gunpowder magazine yard.

powder magazine yard as a site for the church. The Maharaja at once adopted the suggestion and made over the disused yard, under the form of a purchase to Mr. Warren Hastings, in his private capacity, for the church. The Company had sold this property some seven or eight years before. It represents the whole of St. John's compound east of the church together with the public footway beyond the compound wall. It adjoined therefore the old cemetery on the west. Godowns then as now skirted it on the south, while on the north where now the *Englishman* press incessantly pulsates, was the head hospital-surgeon's garden and a private house. In the centre was the magazine, a massive brick building of 60 ft. diameter, and exactly where the new parsonage house is was a tank roughly described as a hundred feet square.

Stimulated by this valuable donation, by the end of 1783 Chaplain Johnson had so stirred up the public spirit and, let us hope, the piety of the town, that he had no less than Rs. 35,000 in promises towards the church building. But these promises

## Chaplain Johnson's zeal.

were collected at the cost of the endurance of a great deal of malicious scandal. Some critics only insisted that the scheme was an impossible one, others merely stolidly opposed it on all sorts of fanciful grounds; but there were many who did not scruple to impute to the promoter base *arrières pensées* of personal profit: "It was said that the scheme for building the church was a scheme for making a fortune." These are the chaplain's own words. Commenting, however, on the completed work the Calcutta Freemasons of the time, in a published letter paying a well-merited tribute to Johnson's zeal, say that the initiation of the scheme and the greater part of the subscriptions "were made during a most expensive war" (we were fighting the Marhattas and Sikhs and also Hyder Ali) "and when both the public and all private persons were distressed for money."

On the strength of the progress made, what is described as "a general meeting of the inhabitants of Calcutta" assembled in St. John's Chapel on the 18th of December, 1783, and appointed a building

## **The Church Building Committee.**

committee. Mr. Warren Hastings with two members of Council headed this committee, and several times Mr. Hastings attended its meetings. Four days later he formally reported to the committee the Maharaja's gift,—but he still retained it in his own hands.

None of the judges, for reasons now difficult to appreciate, but which are stated by Sir William Jones in an extant letter, contributed towards the church building fund, though one of them gave his name on the original list of subscribers. After the general meeting the work went on apace. Within a month, rejecting a proposition to build the church after the pattern of St. Stephen's Walbrook in the city of London, a design for erecting the building as well as for supplying the materials was given to Lieutenant James Agg of the Bengal Engineers, and at the same time the Court of the Company in London was written to to send out a suitable church organ, various fittings, service books—and a set of Communion vessels. Of these last neither number nor weight were specified, it was merely ordered—so magnificent

## Ornaments of the Church.

were the original ideas of the committee—that they should be of “solid gold.”

Up to January 1787, no reply appears to have been received to this comprehensive indent, and it was then repeated in a modified form. The Court, however, had not disregarded the application, but had voted £1,200 towards the provision of Communion plate, an organ, a clock, bells and velvet for the new church.

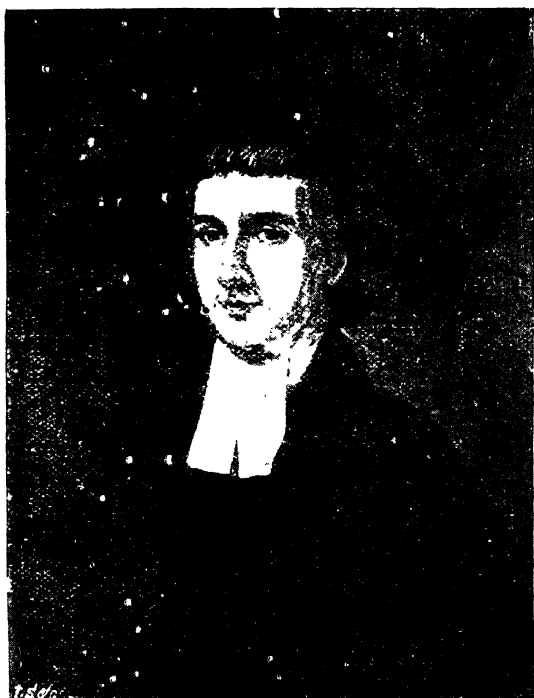
In 1784 Dr. Burn resigned the senior chaplaincy to Johnson and returned home. He promised to try and collect subscriptions from other retired Company's servants for building a parsonage for his successors. Nothing came of this promise, however, and it is not until these pages go to press that the project, often revived, has at last found accomplishment.

According to the fashion of the time the first idea of the committee with a view to enlarging the church building fund was to start a lottery. A Mr. Bartholomew Hartley, one of the presidency surgeons—perhaps either the uncle or the brother of that romanti-

## The Church Lottery.

and extravagant depictress of Calcutta's manners of the time whom we know as "Sophia Goldbourne"—lent his name as the leading promoter of the lottery. There were to be three thousand tickets at ten gold-mohurs apiece. To meet these were to be three hundred and thirty-five prizes varying in amount from a lakh to five hundred sicca rupees. In addition to these prizes the first ticket drawn out of the wheels of fortune was to receive ten thousand rupees, and the holder of the last, twenty thousand. The sale of tickets was calculated to produce Rs. 4,80,000, and the whole of this sum was nominally to be assigned in prizes. Ten per cent., however, was to be deducted from each prize—half of which, namely, Rs. 24,000, was to be handed over to the building committee and the remaining Rs. 24,000—surely an excessive sum for the purpose—was to be assigned under the head of expenses.

For the next five months the lottery was the rage of the settlement. Not a number of the *Gazette* was issued without a column or more being devoted to its



WILLIAM JOHNSON, M.A., Chaplain.  
[From an Original Painting at St. John's See pp. 79, 83, 88, 112.]



## The lottery, festivities.

progress. Speculators, of course, invested in the tickets and retailed fractional chances. On Friday, August 6, 1784, the drawing commenced at the Old Court House. The scene, must have been one of the utmost gaiety and excitement. Each day began with a breakfast given by Dr. Hartley. This over, a brightly bedecked room on the ground-floor became crowded with all the fashion of Calcutta in all its nationalities.

A local poet of the time celebrates the motley gathering thus—

“ Here all nations and languages crowd altogether,  
Regardless of time and the heat of the weather ;  
For each eagerly hopes Fate to him will decree  
The much long'd for Lack in the Church Lottery.  
Here are Frenchmen and Danes, with Mynheers Vander-  
gross,  
And Armenians and Moors, with Sicars Ram and Doss ;  
And beautiful Nymphs form the belle Assemblée,  
That honour the drawing the Church Lottery.”

While another on the special topic of the ladies tells  
us—



## Scene at the drawing.

“Here you might see in brilliant rows  
Beauties balloon’d and powder’d beaus  
Each anxious fidgets,—‘How d’ye feel?’  
‘Lord, Sir, my ticket’s in the wheel!’  
‘I hope, dear ma’am, ’twill be a prize,’  
‘I hope so too,’ dear ma’am replies.”

For the benefit of the curious in matters of dress, it may be here mentioned that a recent Europe ship had brought out from Paris a milliner, who taught the use of ‘air-balloon hats,’ and thereby awoke a passion for these novelties which infected even the elderly matrons of the settlement.

Behind the “brilliant rows” of the “ballooned” and powdered waved the great palm leaf fans, fringed and painted to a brilliance no less glittering. A band of music played at intervals. The wheels were placed on a well-raised platform, so that all might see fair play. The first ticket drawn out, most likely by a charity infant, proved a blank, yet it won the 10,000 rupees prize. The wheels or barrels containing the tickets was turned by charity boys who appear to have

## **Ardours of the day.**

been rewarded for their services by some small interest in the adventure, the profits being kept in hand for each by the vestry until he left school.

After two or three hundred numbers had been drawn the proceedings ceased for the day, and despite the sweltering heat youth and beauty hastened back to the assembly room and exercised themselves in country dances until two o'clock sent them home to dinner. After the first day the market price of the remaining tickets went up from ten to thirteen gold-mohurs. The drawings continued ten days, the value of the surviving chances rising day by day; after the second to fifteen, after the third to twenty, and so on because the chief prizes seem to have long continued undrawn. The *Gazettes* of the 19th and 26th of August contain some racy satirical verses on the proceedings. Let us hope, at least that with regard to the participants, the local bard did not mistake in his published opinion on the church lottery :

"For through the whole of this transaction,  
All was content and satisfaction."

**The end as  
justifying the means.**

There is evidence, however, that Calcutta public opinion was not wholly in favour of the lottery as a subvention of the church fund. Sober minds there were who were reasonably shocked at it. The whole undertaking, however, must be judged according to the ruling ideas of its time. Anyway it was not a more unspiritual way of earning money to the glory of God than are the theatrical entertainments, fancy fairs, balls and raffles which are applauded by the majority to-day as means to the same end.

The actual amount realized for the church building fund by the lottery was over 36,800 Company's rupees. Apparently some of the adventurers had presented their tickets to the fund, and these tickets had won prizes.



**M**EANWHILE Lieutenant Agg had been working hard, and the erection of the sacred edifice was going on briskly. On the previous 6th of April, after

## **Foundation stone laid.**

a public breakfast at the Old Court House. Mr. Edward Wheeler, Senior Member of Council, the Governor-General being then up-country, laid the foundation stone with full masonic ceremonial. The engraved brass inserted therein recorded that the building was being raised under the auspices of "the Honourable Warren Hastings, Esquire, Governor of India."

It was at first intended to build the steeple on the spot where the old gunpowder magazine had stood, but this would have brought the altar to the west instead of to the east end, and it must have been for this reason the idea was abandoned, and being abandoned, the whole edifice was projected within the limits of the burying ground, leaving the magazine yard as a frontage.

• Arrangements were made to provide the church yard with a gateway of Gya stone—this was to have been the special gift of a Mr. Law. Also building stone was to be taken from the ruins of ancient Gaur while the broken tombs of the Kings there were to

## The Pathuriya Girja.

be further despoised to provide blue marble for the floor. Whether these undertakings were carried out does not clearly appear. Most of the building stone.—(though some of it came from Gaur) and the whole of that employed in the steeple (thus earning for the church its native name of *Pathuriya Girja*)—came from Chunar. The vivacious young lady whose name has been already mentioned visited the works and informed her friend Arabella—"There is a new church erecting on quite an European model, with galleries, a set of bells and every suitable *et cætera*; the plan and foundation of which I have seen, conversed with the architect, and from the whole form very high expectations of the superstructure." •

It was originally intended that the church should be thrown up to view by wide open spaces all around. To the west lay the magazine yard, and north and south, and extending some distance to the west was the old cemetery then filled with huge masonry monuments, some of which are shown in Daniell's view taken within 12 months of the completion of the



MR. KIERNANDER'S MISSION CHURCH IN 1788.

[From *Daniell's Views*. \* See page 79.



### Surgeon William Hamilton's gravestone.

completion of the church. What is, now, *Garstin Sahab-ka-barrick* was then waste ground over a filled-up tank, and Government actually agreed (though it soon retracted its consent) to level the whole of its old *Buxie Kannah* buildings — where now stand Messrs. Ahmuty's premises and the Stationery Office — so that the church might be open to the river.

While preparing the foundations for the steeple or western porch, the gravestone of the famous surgeon, William Hamilton, was discovered, and Mr. Warren Hastings suggested that it should be placed in the centre niche of the entrance at the east end of the church and that the whole of the raised lettering, English and Persian, should be gilded. In 1786 it was decided to carry out this suggestion; nevertheless the stone is now in the Charnock mausoleum and is not gilded.

There can be no doubt but that it is to the patriotic spirit of the illustrious Hastings that we owe the presidency church of St. John. The chaplain, indeed, proposed the scheme to Government



### **Mr. Hastings' deed of Trust.**

in 1776; but it was not until the Governor-General himself in 1782 moved the Maharaja to give a site, and himself took the most prominent part in promoting the public subscription, that the project became possible. From that time until he retired from his government in February 1785, he and Mrs. Hastings also took a lively interest in its progress. In February 1784 he wrote to his wife, then on her voyage home, "The church scheme which you had so much at heart goes on prosperously, and I expect the foundation to be laid in less than two months." One of his latest acts in India was the execution, a week before his resignation, of a Trust deed conveying the magazine yard estate to nine of the original members of the Building Committee and their representatives by inheritance or election forever.

This Trust deed must have been prepared at the very beginning of the church-building scheme, for it conveyed to the trustees not only the land but also the church to be erected thereon, and we know that it was early decided to build the church on

## **The Trustees of the Church ground.**

Government' land—though perhaps the eastern portico may overlap the land actually conveyed. Beyond assenting, as they must have done, to the consecration of their ground in 1787 there is no evidence that these trustees ever performed any official act. The select vestry of six members (five of whom between 1783 and 1787 were among the original nine trustees) succeeded informally into the exercise of their functions and claimed even so late as 1835 (when Government fully assumed the ownership and reconstituted the vestry) to hold both the church and ground in trust under Mr. Hastings' conveyance. By that time the existence of this deed had, as will presently be suggested, nearly caused the adoption of a procedure which would, if the state lawyers had not protected the Church from it, have prejudiced the right of the Church in India to rely on the common law ecclesiastical of England.

By January of 1787 the Building Committee, finding itself short of funds, applied to Government for a grant of 3,500 sicca rupees. Government

**John Zoffany,**  
**R.A.**

apparently did not give the money, but instead notified that it would gazette the names of all subscribers who had failed to redeem their promises. Perhaps this singular threat succeeded, for, by the end of April, the deficit was reduced to Rs 480. However, it was found that to complete the church in a worthy manner over fifty thousand rupees were still required, and to raise this the chaplains—a Mr. Blanshard had now become Johnson's colleague—and the committee vigorously renewed their exertions.

At this time Mr. John Zoffany, a Royal Academician, then resident in Calcutta, offered to present as an altar-piece a great picture of the Last Supper, which he was then finishing. The committee accepted the gift with alacrity, and their minutes testify that but for lacking the necessary funds, they would have given the painter a ring of the value of Rs. 5,000 as a testimonial of their sense of the "favour he had conferred upon the settlement" in presenting "so capital a painting, that it would adorn the first church

## The great Altar-piece.

in Europe, and should excite in the breasts of its spectators those sentiments of virtue and piety, which are so happily portrayed in the figure." The figures, strange to say—at least such is the testimony of an old tradition—are portraits of prominent Calcutta inhabitants, the Greek priest having sat for our Blessed Lord, and the auctioneer, Tulloh, having unconsciously provided the study for Judas. This astonishing tradition is borne out by the painting itself, now preserved in the west gallery, for the faces of the apostles are quite unidealized and some of them commonplace. Besides, Zoffany's English practice had lain largely in portraying Garrick and other play-actors in character. Indeed, it is said, that an impudent impersonation of this sort, involving the portrait of a Royal personage, was the cause of his emigration to India. The painting has always been much admired. Another Last Supper altar-piece by Zoffany is in East Brentford Church near London.



## The General Vestry of 1787.

ON the 8th of May 1787, the church being then, very nearly complete, a general vestry of the inhabitants of Calcutta was held to rehabilitate the parish organization, there being at the moment neither churchwarden nor sidesman. With the minutes of this meeting the existing series of vestry minutes opens, all earlier records of the sort having been lost among the personal effects of the late churchwarden Vansittart. The meeting was presided over by the Governor-General, Charles, Earl Cornwallis, K.G., and there were ten gentlemen present, besides the chaplains. At this meeting two churchwardens were elected instead of the one hitherto in office, and two sidesmen to assist them. The churchwardens were Edward Hay and Richard Johnson (neither of them civilians), and the sidesmen, Charles Sealy, last Recorder of the Mayor's Court and first of the Supreme Court, of whom his descendant, the Earl of Northbrook, has lately presented to the vestry a valuable portrait in oils. The other sidesman was that Cudbert Thornhill, whom Sir William Hunter

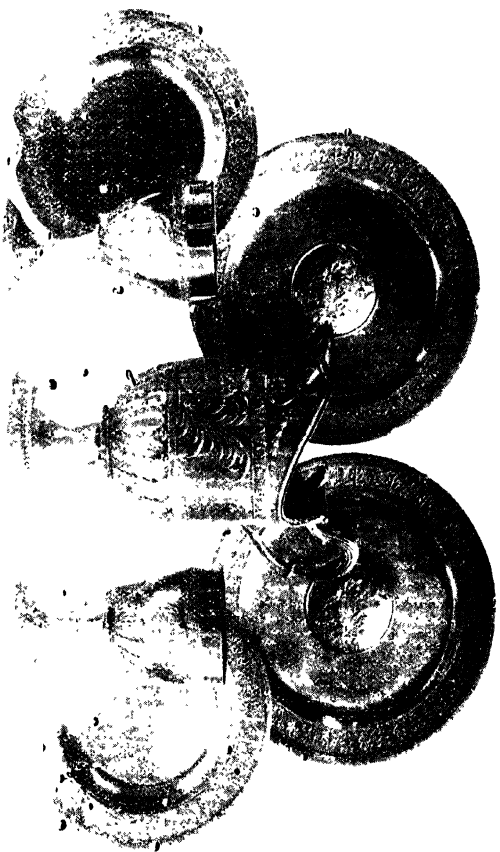


PLATE VII. (237 ov) Presented by the H. L. I. Co. to St. John's in 1787. The two  
Alms-dishes (36 ov) were obtained later.



## **The Consecration deeds.**

has celebrated as the "eighteenth century Sinbad." These officials qualified themselves by taking oath before the Justices of the Supreme Court. '

Under favour of Lord Cornwallis, two handsome windfalls accrued to the church fund just before the consecration. One of these was a sum of over Rs. 7,200, resulting from the sale of certain confiscated goods. The other was a sum exceeding Rs. 5,600, the produce of the melting down of silver, which had adorned a damaged State pavilion.

Lord Cornwallis, who had brought out with him the previous year the legal instruments necessary to the consecration under the seal of the Archbishop of Canterbury, fixed the morning of Sunday, the 24th of June, St. John the Baptist's Day, for the consecration solemnities. It is much to be regretted that neither these documents nor copies of them can be found, though the "Act" was printed, and 300 impressions struck off for distribution. There can be no doubt, however, as to their general tenor. Like those issued in 1706 by the Bishop of London for



## **St. John's Church Consecrated.**

the consecration of St. Anne's, they must have consisted of a Commission constituting a commissary, a Petition from the freeholders of the site (in this case presumably, Government and the Trustees of the added ground), praying the commissary to perform the consecration and engaging to hold the church as a holy place and separate forever to the sacred uses of the Church of England: and thirdly, the Sentence or Act, by which the commissary declared that he had fulfilled his commission according to the prayer of the petition.

"A very numerous and respectable company of ladies and gentlemen assembled," so runs the official report, to witness the consecration. The Governor-General attended, and so did members of Council and Judges and the Armenian clergyman. After the performance of so much of the consecration rites as respected the edifice, the Holy Eucharist was celebrated. The sermon in this was preached by Mr. Johnson on the text, "Holiness becometh thy House forever," and at the offertory nearly four thousand

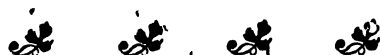
### **The Trust Deed as a precedent,**

rupees was collected for the benefit of the charity school. The sacred vessels, from St. John's Chapel must have been used in this service, since the splendid set of plate still in use did not arrive until the September following. After the celebration, the ground surrounding the church was consecrated, doubtless by perambulation with appropriate psalms and prayers.

Mr. Warren Hastings' Trust deed was the only one of the documents connected with the consecration, which was in existence when St. John's became the Cathedral of the diocese of India, Australasia and other regions, on the arrival of the first Bishop. It must have been its existence, as a solitary curiosity, that put it into the Bishop's mind, when the next church in Bengal after St. John's was ready for consecration, that for it too a Trust deed must be provided to guarantee its permanent dedication to church uses. His Lordship can have had no English precedent for this notion, but he represented to Government his opinion as to the need of such a document, though the church then in question had been built wholly or

## Consecration of Churches in India.

nearly so, and the site provided at Government expense. Government was quite willing to comply, and ordered its Law officers to frame such a protective deed; but since English Church law failed to provide precedents, they explained to Government that no deed of trust could be necessary under the circumstances nor even expedient; that in India the mere declaration of Government that it undertook to preserve the churches to be consecrated forever to church use should satisfy the Bishop. It did satisfy the Bishop, and ever afterwards Indian Bishops have acted in consecration in faith of the guarantee implied in the Government's sanction of that solemn act—that sanction declaring a perpetual dedication in exclusive favour of the Church of England as effectually as any written document (of the kind which Government had been originally willing to provide in deference to the notion once entertained by our first Bishop) could possibly do.



St. John's in  
1788: Exterior.

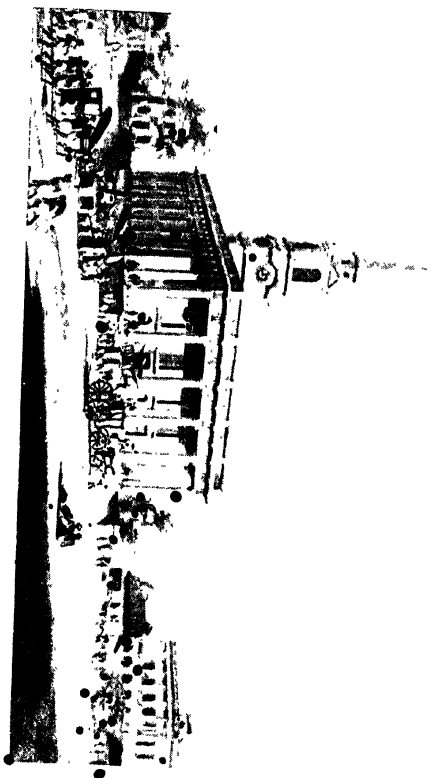
St. John's Church as it appeared at its consecration, or within a year of it, was externally exactly as now, save that it had probably no western porch or but a narrow one, and certainly had neither the north and south porticoes nor the four palanquin slopes and carriage roads nor the sacarium. The chief entrance was in the middle of the eastern wall.

If you were a person of fashion yet did not choose to go to church in your yellow chariot, you would arrive in a neat sedan-chair gleaming with black lacquer. You brought at least seven servants with you—four chair bearers, two running footmen with spears and one parasol bearer. If you had official rank, your silver mace would occupy the services of at least another runner. Alighting at the great eastern staircase of Chuzar stone you ascended under the screen of your huge painted parasol to a tile-paved terrace beneath the eastern portico. Here a sentry with a firelock guarded the entrance. Passing him you found yourself in a wide, narrow vestibule and at

**St. John's in  
1788: Interior.**

the back of the curved recess that enclosed the altar ; to the right and left were staircases leading up to the doors of the galleries. (This vestibule was abolished in 1811.) Passing beneath one of these staircases into the interior you saw that the altar was set in an apse (not vaulted probably) and on a pavement of white Chinese marble. Above it hung the great picture, and it was protected by a curved railing. The body of the church would have been found to be paved with black or blue-grey marble and to be occupied by the pews of the poor and persons of the lower official ranks. These pews probably all faced north and south on either side of a broad central aisle.

The galleries at first were for the exclusive accommodation of persons of wealth and quality. The western gallery was only just large enough to contain the organ and singers ; at its angles were the pews of the chaplains' families and of the churchwardens and sidesmen. The tall pulpit with the reading desk below it stood right in front of this



THE PRESIDENT JOHN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN, 1788.  
[From *Benett's View*, No. 109.]



## The dignity of the Gallery.

western gallery. The handsome columns, supporting the galleries and roof were then of the plain Doric style, like those of the exterior. They were converted into the Corinthian in 1811. In the midst of the northern gallery was the bowed-out pew of the Governor-General and his Council, for the tradition that makes the south to be the side of dignity in the nave of a church has always been reversed at St. John's. Matching this pew on the southern side was the place of the Judges of the Supreme Court. The ladies of the settlement at first were grouped by themselves behind the Governor-General, while the gentlemen sat behind the Judges. But the ladies as a body took so violent a dislike to sitting facing south—perhaps because of the glare—that a *Gazette* published in the October of 1787 required the gentlemen to change over with them. The rooms now occupied as vestries were probably so used in 1787. In the steeple hung the bell dated 1777, now cracked almost in half. This had been probably brought from the old chapel. There was a clock



## Retirement of Chaplain Johnson.

also in the steeple, but occupying a lower stage than that at present does.

Having seen the church he had laboured so hard, and well to procure both built and furnished, and the parish organization rehabilitated as closely as was possible to the ideals of English Church law (the rules given in "Burn's Justice" were adopted, adopted and duly gazetted), Mr. Johnson resigned and returned home. He sailed in January 1788. The Council promised that the Court should be requested to permit him to return should he desire it. But his health had quite broken down, and he was a martyr to sciatica, and though he probably lived for at least another twenty years he never returned. He had a good private fortune, three and a half lakhs of rupees, and his wife, "the old Begum," refusing to quit India with him, is said to have remitted to him a handsome annuity. Ali classes regretted Johnson's departure, but especially the Freemasons, to whose interests he for fifteen years had been actively devoted, and whose traditions, to judge by a reported sermon, he fully

## How St. John's passed into the charge of Government.

accepted. In the vestry is a first-rate portrait of William Johnson probably by Zoffany. No trace has been yet found of the remainder of his career. , 2

On the 4th of December 1789, the Building Committee made over their charge, to the Select Vestry, though the church and compound presented still an unfinished appearance and there were works yet remaining to be done at an estimated cost of Rs. 5,600. To meet this Government gave Rs. 4,000. At this time it was customary for the Vestry to meet all church expenses, including salaries of establishment from the Charity Fund, Government, from time to time refunding this expenditure. The cost of the establishment only was then estimated at Rs. 6,180 a year. Government now repairs the church and pays the clergy, but has ceased to contribute toward the current expenses of St. John's.



THE *Calcutta Gazette* of the 11th August, 1788,  
publishes a décret by which the mother parish of

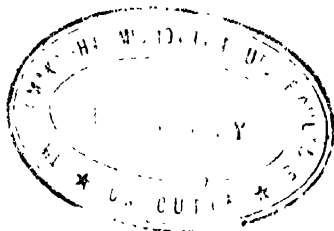
## Division of the parish of Bengal.

St. John became in effect divided into eight portions each with its own resident clergyman. The new district parishes were Fort William, Barrackpore, Dinapore, Chunar, Berhampore, Fatehgarh and Cawnpore, and with this date, therefore, these notes on the story of the mother parish find their appropriate close.

It is hoped that the reader will regret as much as does the writer that in the foregoing pages so little beyond the most superficial affairs of a spiritual institution has been discussed. But the world of the inner experiences, the trials, joys and hopes of pastor and people leaves hardly any vestiges upon what is almost the only source of information respecting the persons and things here discussed—the records and correspondence of the Honourable East India Company. The period reviewed, which in British India belongs to antiquity, covers the dead age of the Church of England: yet the very year with which it closes brought into the presidency chaplaincy a spiritual son of Wesley, who was immediately followed on the ecclesiastical establishment by disciples of

**"GOD giveth  
the increase."**

Sir:—and in God's providence in due course the line of our Bishops was begun, thus gradually over the fallow field ploughed and sown by the Evangelicals dawned anew the better day of the "Gospel of the Kingdom."













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